FROM THE ARCHIVE OF PROG & CLASSIC ROCK

GENESIS

50 years of prog rock genius

THE COMPLETE STORY!

Exclusive Interviews

Gabriel, Collins, Rutherford, Banks and Hackett speak!

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway

The inside story of their 70s masterpiece

The 40 Greatest Genesis Songs Ever

As voted by you!

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COVER IMAGE: BARRIE WENTZELL

Say the name Genesis to someone and you'll get one of two responses. One is that they were the cornerstone British progressive rock band fronted by Peter Gabriel who helped lay down the foundations for the genre in the early 70s. The other is that they were the arena-packing pop-rock behemoths fronted by Phil Collins who spent much of the 80s dominating the airwaves in the UK, the USA and pretty much everywhere else on the planet during that decade and beyond.

Both are true – few bands have had two such distinct and different halves to their careers. But it doesn't quite tell the full story. Genesis weren't just one thing or the other. They wrote pop songs during their prog era, while there were moments during their mid-80s imperial phase when their progressive roots were still visible. And then there are the spaces between those two towering pillars of their career – their beginnings as a tentative folk-pop outfit, the transitional albums they made after the departure of Gabriel and guitarist Steve Hackett that now sound like the 1980s arriving a couple of years early, and even their unfairly maligned swansong, *Calling All Stations*, the sole album with singer Ray Wilson.

But their momentous achievements are carved in stone. The 23-minute *Supper's Ready* remains the definitive progressive rock song, setting the template for everything that followed. Ditto 1974's *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, arguably the greatest – and certainly maddest – concept album of the era, one that took Peter Gabriel's theatricality to another level.

And then there are the solo careers it produced. Peter Gabriel became a visionary solo star in his own right, bringing the worlds of rock and the avant garde closer together. Phil Collins eclipsed everyone in his guise as a purveyor of shiny pop and blue-eyed soul (even if Genesis's original fans never forgave him for it). Steve Hackett, Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford all racked up solo success in a wide and varying array of fields.

This collection of interviews and articles taken from the hallowed pages of *Prog* and *Classic Rock* magazines is a celebration of all that. Inside, you'll find exclusive interviews with the main protagonists alongside a look back at the key albums they made, from *Nursery Cryme* and *Foxtrot* through *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* and beyond, plus the 40 greatest Genesis songs ever. So sit back, put on *Supper's Ready* at maximum volume and enjoy.

Dave Everley,
Editor

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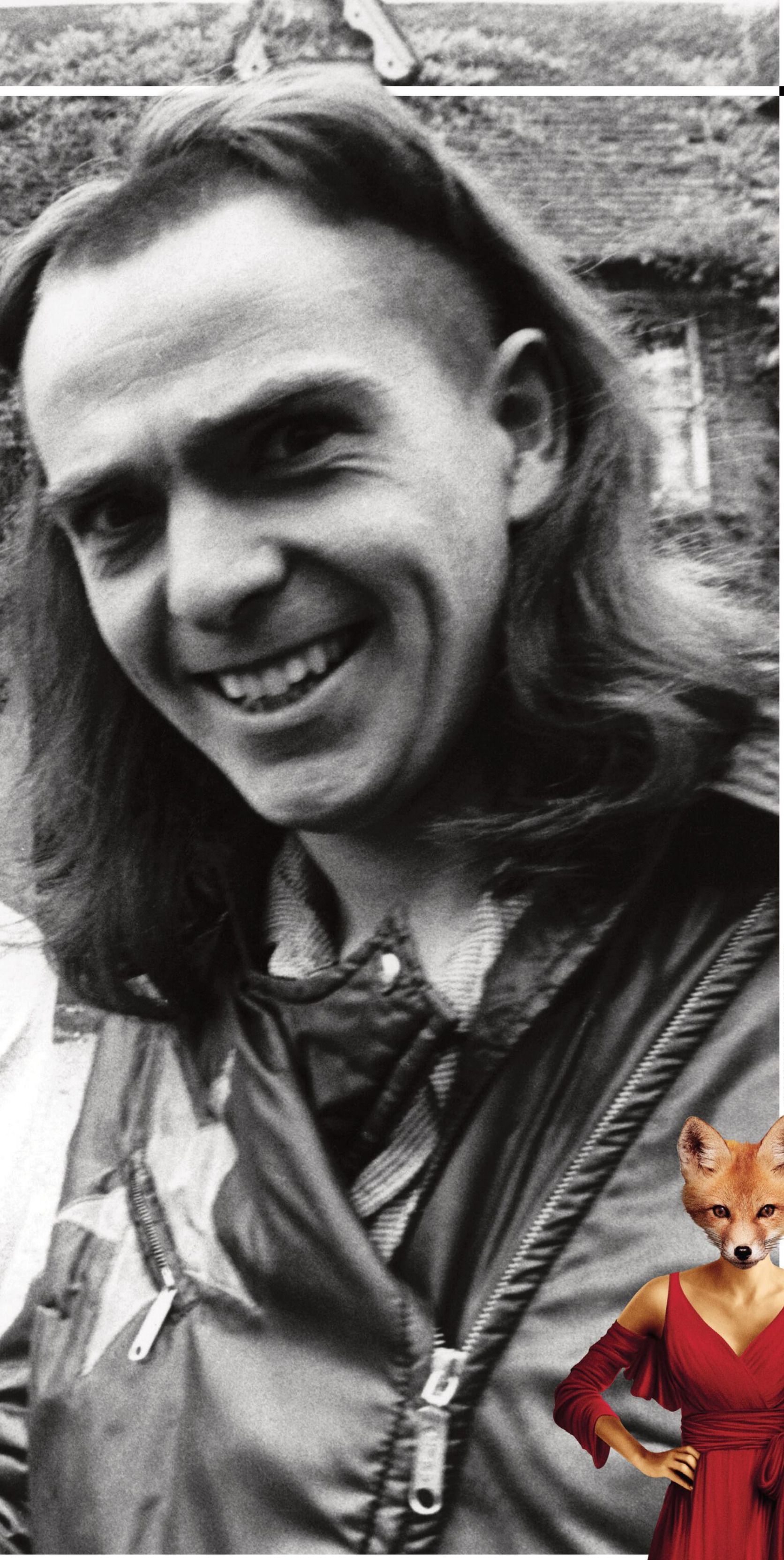

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MAIN IMAGE: GETTY FOXY LADY: MAGIC TORCH

Stargazers, not street-fighters: Peter Gabriel and Steve Hackett (top row); Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks (bottom row).

Supper's Ready

The epic story of Genesis, Part 1

Just over 50 years ago, some boys from a public school in Surrey formed a band. Their debut album sold the grand total of 650 copies. But over the next two decades they would become one of the biggest and most progressive bands in the world. In the first part of a *Classic Rock* exclusive, all the members of the classic Genesis line-up look back on an illustrious career.

Words: **Chris Roberts** Portrait: **Barrie Wentzell**

"We will rock you, rock you, little snake/We will keep you snug and warm' *Supper's Ready*

"Genesis occupies a slightly strange place in the music world," says Tony Banks. "No one's quite sure what we are. Were we just Peter's backing band? Were we then just Phil's backing band? Are we a pop band? A progressive band? None of these? No one's sure. Those albums, from *Trespass* right up to *Duke*, are very distinctive. They couldn't be any other band. They do things that nobody else has ever really done within pop music."

The tide may be tentatively turning, but for years you had to be fiercely loyal to declare, within human earshot, that you liked Genesis. They were never 'cool'. First they were culty weirdos, and then they were unfashionably huge. Their story doesn't offer the approved music-lore clichés of sex, drugs oreven, really, rock'n'roll. It offers romance, arty intoxication and symphonic melodrama.

"To be honest, the amount we toured, you couldn't be those guys, have that sort of lifestyle," says Mike Rutherford. "It's a lovely idea, but if you're one of those wonderful stories then you're on to a burn-out. Our work ethic, and we loved doing it, wouldn't allow mishaps."

Neither were they ever faux-feral working-class heroes. Generally they eschewed urban imagery to encourage escapism into fables, surrealism, whimsy, a dream-world both subterranean and in-the-clouds. Their early, elegiac, 70s albums still evoke nostalgia for an idyll that perhaps never really existed, an England that got lost in the cracks of generational shifts, a youth that was never soyoung. For what Louis MacNeice called "sunlighton the garden".

Then, having along the way made an inspired double album about Manhattan, cannibalism, castration, masturbation, marketing, stalactites and stalagmites, a band frequently dismissed as dinosaurs moved with the times – and got flak for that too. They not only survived but thrived after switching singers and the punk cull, honing themselves intoa compressed, pragmatic, all-conquering 80spop machine.

Little did they know, when their core formed at school in 1967, that they would enjoy a (give or take) 40-year career that would transcend key members leaving and a mutation from fantastical fancy-dress and complex prog to (albeit still reserved) blokes next door and stadium-filling tunes. They haven't done it by the rock rulebook.

In their own special way, defying all received wisdom, Genesis have broken every rule.

'Me? I'm just a lawnmower. You can tell me by the way I walk.' This line, from *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*, baffled all and sundry in April 1974. Eight months after its initial release, the song became Genesis's first 'hit' single, soaring to No.21. In late 2011, I'm asking Peter Gabriel, in Kensington, what that was all about. He repeats the line to himself, both amused and bemused, like a man poring over a treasure map.

"Me? I'm just a lawnmower," he says. "Hmmm." He doesn't scratch his head, but he might as well. He decides to make an honest stab at explaining it. "Well. There was this idea that the controlled suburban act of mowing the lawn was actually a way of manifesting a barely repressed violence. Therewas this kid who'd been very contained, but was angry about things, about authority. And so hewas gripping the handles of the lawnmower.Like this. *Grrr*."

He was seething?

"Yes… but I'd have to look at the lyrics again to remember more. To remember what the hell I was on about! There were a lot of riddles and mysteries…"

You once said Genesis stretched the boundaries with the tools available to you at the time.

"Exactly. We did what we could to take you to another place. And occasionally, I think we did. You could feel it."

It's autumn 1970, and Phil Collins (who would become one of the most successful musicians of all time) is going to an audition. He's seen an advert in *Melody Maker*, and found out it's for Genesis. "The thing that really appealed to me about them was that they were working," he tells me. "I used to buy the music papers religiously, and their name kept cropping up." So he makes his way to Peter Gabriel's parents' house. It has a swimming pool. "In leafy Chobham. It was a distant cry from end-of-the-Piccadilly-Line Middlesex. So my initial impression, I suppose, was: 'This isa bit of alright.' It was all very different from the sweaty, first-floor pubs that I was used to playing. Grand piano on the patio, smoking jackets, drums set up under a garden umbrella…"

Smoking jackets?

"Rutherford denies this, butI swear to this day that he was wearing a purple… sorry,a maroon… smoking jacket. Or perhaps dressing gown. It was just a different scene. They'd prepared bits for the drummers who were auditioning that day. They took some of us into the living room to listen to the new album, which was *Trespass*. I was aware when I heard it that it was… unlike most things. In my memory it was very sunny, a Crosby Stills & Nash kind of thing, but it wasn't even a nice day, so I don't know why I think that. There were harmonies; it seemed 'light'."

Collins thought he could "bring something to it". "But I didn't feel like I fitted in at first. Our backgrounds were very different. They were still very highly strung from public school, and I'd been at drama school, which was then the other end of the evolutionary scale."

So they were reserved, and you weren't?

"They were very uptight people. Steve [Hackett] nailed it when he said that in arguments, one of them is likely to say: 'Well, you stole my protractor at school!' I made them laugh, and was able to deflate some of the pompousness. But then I really enjoyed the writing period we did, of what was to become *Nursery Cryme*. Actually, as soon as I joined the band they all went off on holiday for two weeks, and that became the only time I've ever done a real job in my whole life. Anyway, they came back and I was suddenly on £10 a week. As opposed to the fivea week I'd been on with my previous band, Flaming Youth. In those days £10 was a lot of money."

Genesis had formed in 1967 when Peter Gabriel, Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford were at Charterhouse boys-only public school in Surrey. If you were looking for artists who spit out gritty portraits of street life titled 'My Struggle', Charterhouse – privileged, upper middle-class, extremely English – would be the last place to look. Rutherford was banned from playing the guitar there "because it was a symbol of the revolution". From two school bands – Garden Wall and The Anon – these three combined with first guitarist Anthony Phillips and original drummer Chris Stewart (soon replaced by John Silver, then John Mayhew). They drew the attention of a Charterhouse old boy who'd had a hit with *Everyone's Gone To The Moon* and had contacts in publishing and at record companies. That old boy was none other than Jonathan King.

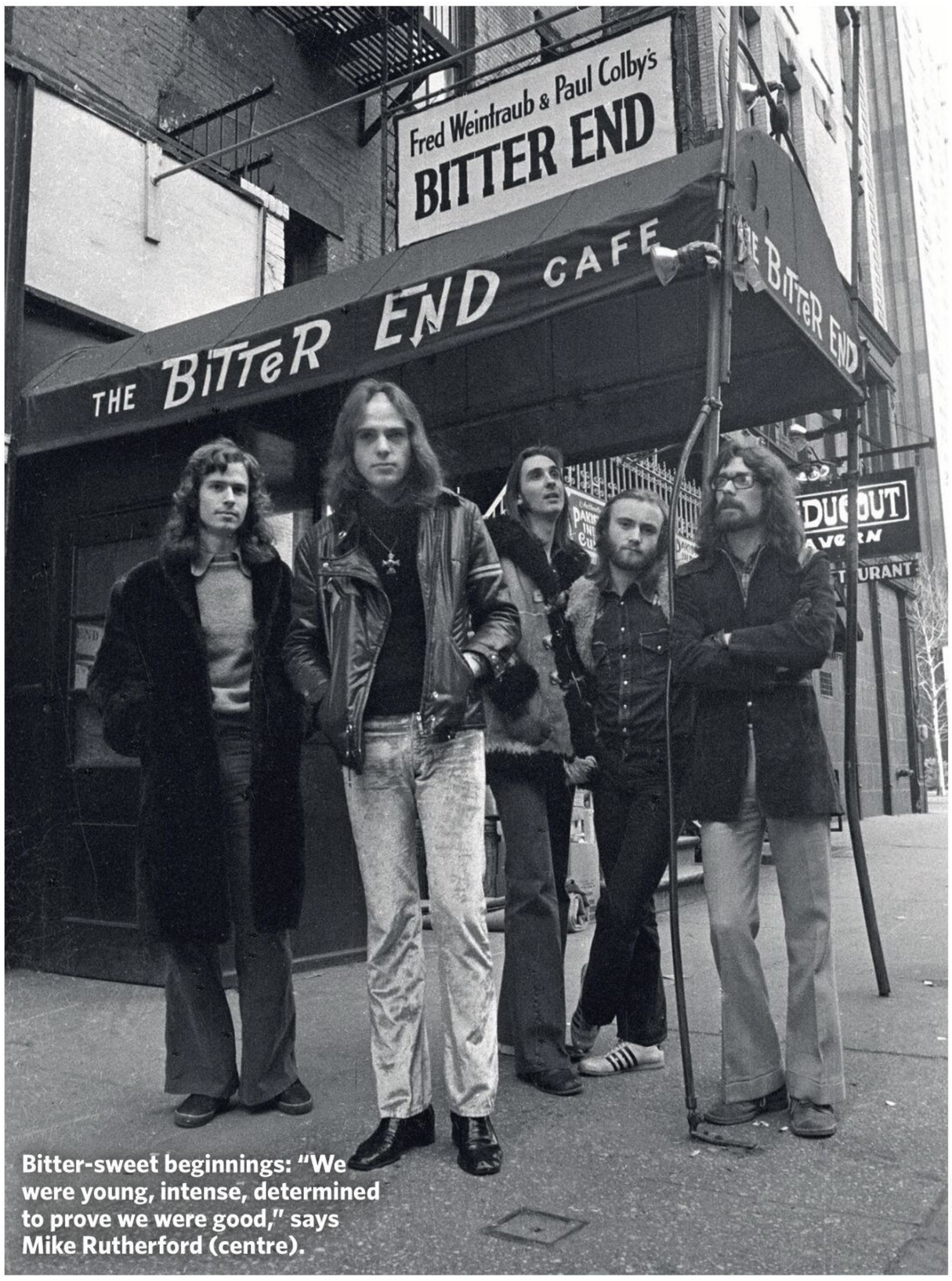
"We had some help from him at the time," recalls Gabriel. "With us and 10cc and a few others he was very encouraging. He was great with pop songs, but when we tried to get beyond that, he switched off. He, er, got into trouble in later years, but deserves credit for being a great enthusiast."

After rejecting proposed names like Gabriel's Angels (King's idea) and the Champagne Meadows (Phillips's suggestion), they became Genesis. Then, because there was a US band called Genesis, Revelation. Then Genesis again. The neglected debut album – *From Genesis To Revelation* – came out in 1969 and sold 650 copies. Recently reissued, it

wasa concept album about the creation of the universe and the evolution of man. It sounded likea more psychedelic Bee Gees. Yes, *that* good. It may be the finest album ever recorded in one day by schoolboys then drowned in strings by Jonathan King without their knowledge so that you can barely hear the band.

"You have dreams and hopes," muses Banks, "but we never thought it would last anything like as long as it did. Our heroes were The Beatles. The idea at first was to interest publishers in our songs, as writers. It became apparent that no one else was going to do them, so we ended up doing them ourselves. That first album was an adventure: we suddenly realised we did have the capabilities within us. Peter was obviously a good singer, and the rest of us couldjust about do the stuff. We wereall learning."

"When you're that age," says Rutherford, "you don't really think far ahead. Two years is a lifetime. We wanted to be songwriters, and became a band to get the songs heard. The very first gig, we all set up in the wrong place, sort of one in front of the other. We left school, and my ambition was to play the Marquee club. I couldn't see beyond that. There was no beyond that. In those days, to geta chance to make an album was quite rare. We were lucky. Without that summer moment, having that chance, we may not have gone the whole way."



Bitter-sweet beginnings: "We were young, intense, determined to prove we were good," says Mike Rutherford (centre).

BARRIE WENTZELL

Genesis's 'Jonathan King era' ended, but the boys became young men and continued. "We didn't know if we could make it fly, that's for sure," says Gabriel. "We couldn't sustain ourselves for the first two or three years. There were moments when it all seemed very bleak and doomy. Tony was going to go back to university; I had this place at film school. Everyone considered options. And then there was a flicker of hope. I'm an eternal optimist and was much inclined to give it one more go. Plus, I just loved music. It was what we got the most pleasure from doing." *Trespass*, featuring live favourite *The Knife*, came out in 1970, after which Anthony Phillips left, citing poor health and stage fright. This is where Phil Collins, and soon afterwards guitarist Steve Hackett, came in, and the 'classic' 70s Genesis line-up was established.

"Funnily enough," says Rutherford, "when Anthony left I found that harder [than when Peter left]. We'd been four school friends together –I didn't think we could survive without one of us."

"I thought, we've got to give it a go," says Tony Banks. "And I'm glad we did. I always got a thrill out of playing with the band that I couldn't get any other way."

Collins and Hackett made their Genesis recording debuts on *Nursery Cryme* (1971). Charisma (the label) had been supportive, and by now the band, helped by increasingly marvellous album sleeves, were mapping out their unique terrain. *The Musical Box*, from that album, is a fine example of their ability to weave contrasting sonic shapes into a bravura whole. The ambition is epic, the delivery understated, until an emotional, thrusting climax, begging for human contact. Generally (though the humour and wit is often overlooked) their lyrical themes deal with allegories, Bible stories, quests – anything but the nitty-gritty of mundane everyday life. Genesis were stargazers, not street-fighters.

"The reason was we didn't feel very comfortable writing about real things and relationships," smiles Banks. "We were also pretty green! PersonallyI hadn't had any relationships at that stage. We'd been well-exposed to the Greek myths and everything at school, so for the first three albums that's where we went. It was something to hide behind, not wishing to express too much about ourselves. In the film world, they'd say we were 'working in the fantasy genre'. It was trying to take people away. We were definitely an escapist group. The shows we did, it was so people could lose themselves for an hour-and-a-half."

"Early on," remarks Rutherford, "we were very popular in northern industrial towns, because of that escapist element. We were also learning how to play as a unit, that sometimes one note is as good as 10. Before, we had too much going on, too many ideas: we were young, intense, determined to prove we were good."

What did titles like *The Fountain Of Salmacis* and *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed* mean to Phil Collins? Was he into it, or just going along with it?

"I was just going along with it," he replies instantly. "I wasn't very literate. My education stopped because I was always out on auditions from drama school, and therefore didn't get my exams. But at the time – let's take ourselves back to that period – the lyrics weren't looked upon with hilarity or disdain, as similar lyrics might be now. Because of the way the majority of the band – i.e. everybody but me – was brought up, showing emotions was… not easy. A lot was bottled up. And so 'I love you' never featured in a lyric. It was all about *Lord Of The Rings* or science-fiction or whatever. Which made us different from anyone else, you know. And that was good. I guess old fans would say that, slowly, as we became more 'normal' we became less interesting. Old fans would say that."

"More and more now, I understand why people liked it," says Steve Hackett. "Even the things I did with the band that I may have personally rejected. People will wax eloquent about pretty much every track. I was the quiet man of Genesis, the mute guitarist sitting on a stool, but I've since learned to open up to people. When you're young you get used to being slapped down and not listened to. Time gives you confidence in your opinions. I can enjoy Genesis now."

Time was also giving Peter Gabriel confidence on stage. In 1972, having been told by Genesis's press officer that the band weren't getting coverage because they "were so fucking boring", he decided something had to be done. In his wardrobe. He wore some costumes which were, to say the least, flamboyant.

"To some extent it was trying to illustrate the lyrics," Banks qualifies. "But Peter just wanted to get us noticed, yes, as much as anything else. The first costume, the red dress and the fox's head… I don't quite know what made him do it. I think he's a shy person, but with an exhibitionist streak, and he likes to shock. He shocked us as much as anybody else! We had no idea, and he walks on suddenly wearing all that. The main thing we noticed was that next week we were on the front page of *Melody Maker*. So we thought, well, this is okay. Peter was very happy doing it. Once he started doing the flower mask and everything, it was relevant to the song. We always liked a bit of theatre; it becamea very important part of the show. Prior to that we hadn't quite known how to look different."

"Peter's strength is his bravery," remarks Rutherford. "He'll go for something unusual. It doesn't always work, but when it does it's fantastic. He didn't tell us he was going to walk on in a fox's head and red dress – because if he had we'd have said: 'Of course you can't! You're not serious?' So he was very clever. Imagine touring the southernstates in America, though, in 1973. We were just from Mars."

"I wouldn't say I was surprised," offers Collins.

GETTY

Work, rest and play: Genesis in the studio.

> **“I was the quiet man of Genesis. When you’re young you get used to being slapped down and not listened to.”**
> **Steve Hackett**

“There were lots of instrumental sections, and Peter was left alone with very little to do. So he kind of… found something *to* do. When he wasn’t playing his bass drum or his flute, there was dead space. So he filled it. If you jump forward a few years, in the end that’s what people wrote about and put the emphasis on. And yes, that rankled a little bit,I suppose. But it wasn’t jealousy. I felt he understood our frustration that people were talking about what he wore rather than what we played. It’s easier to do that, is why. The theatrical side of it developed, and it was fun, and it worked because the music was very powerful.”

Your costumes were bold and eye-catching, Mr Gabriel, but, perhaps like Ziggy Stardust, too bold and eye-catching for America.

“I remember Steve Miller, the guitarist, having to introduce us on a TV programme called *Midnight Express* he was hosting that week. And he shrugged: ‘There’s a lot of noise about ‘theatre-rock’, and… this is it.’ He clearly didn’t like the hassle of being involved or connected with us at all. Much later, they loved it in America, but back then they saw it as too camp, too contrived. If I’d seen it I’d probably have agreed.”

‘The frog was a prince, the prince was a brick, the brick was an egg/And the egg was a bird. Hadn’t you heard?’ – *Supper’s Ready*

Seventies theatre-rock is one thing. Seventies progressive rock, or prog, is another. Despite the fact that most laymen, asked to quickly name two vintage prog bands, would come up with Yes and Genesis, the latter have always resisted the label as best they can. Although in the past they’ve been described as everything from ‘opera witha backbeat’ to ‘English hymns with big-band rhythms’, Banks for one has tried (without convincing success) to assert ‘intelligent pop’ asa catchphrase.

Rutherford says: “I never really got the ‘prog’ tag. Even though we did long numbers, it felt song-driven. Some of the progressive bands were more about musicianship. We were about compositional strength. That’s the key to longevity.”

Collins says: “I wasn’t a big fan of all those boring bands that went diddly-diddly-diddly on the guitar. We didn’t do that!”

Banks “never liked being lumped in with anybody. We felt a slightly different ethos to some of those groups. Yes, King Crimson and ELP were selling technical proficiency a little more than us.I know technique got displayed more in the early 70s, but it was never our reason for doing a piece.”

When the Genesis of 1972 did a piece, they really *did* a piece. The album *Foxtrot* struggled to contain the 23-minute, seven-part epic *Supper’s Ready*. Possibly the *War And Peace* or *Ulysses* of prog, bursting with lofty ambition, it included segments named *The Guaranteed Eternal Sanctuary Man, How Dare I Be So Beautiful?* and *Apocalypse In 9/8*. It included short sweet songs, long bitter songs, billowing dreamscapes and juddering, disconcerting passages. It had Gabriel singing of good versus evil, religion, love, Winston Churchill dressed in drag, firemen, farmers, 666 and walking across the sitting room to turn the television off. Of a new Jerusalem, and a flower. It remains their only real attempt at that prog trope: the side-long song cycle. It shifts – not seamlessly, but with wilful shock value – from the leisurely *Lover’s Leap* to the jaunty *Willow’s Farm* to the soaring, heroic *As Sure As Eggs Is Eggs*. On stage, for the finale, the singer would ascend to the heavens (well, the ceiling) in a shiny silver suit, as outrageous and audience-devouring as a cross between Ziggy Stardust and Rasputin. It’s one of the most astonishing achievements in rock’s chequered history, with cinematic scale and scope, and if its reputation has been diminished by fashion, young jaws can still be caused to drop by an introduction to it. Those young jaws will then form the words: “I didn’t know people were allowed to make music like this.”

“It did feel like we’d captured some emotion in it,” says Gabriel today. “Particularly at the end. There was this whole idea of a journey. It was influenced by things like John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, as was *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. We were consciously trying to break out of tradition, sowe’d throw together different ideas and influences and see if there was a fresh way of putting themall together.”

Do you still like it?

“I still enjoy it, yes. I’m still… attracted to it. I did consider playing it with my normal band not long ago, but there was a lot of resistance about trying to learn it. It’s not easy, so we didn’t really get far. It’s still something I wouldn’t mind looking at, or maybe just sections of it. Oh, I don’t know though, it’d be nice to do it as a whole piece.”

“We wanted to go further,” says Banks. “We’d all been wanting to push away from the regular structures. We’d say: *why* have you got to go verse-chorus-verse-chorus-et cetera? Fine for some,but it’s nice if you can go somewhere else. Andyou can tell more of a story that way, withoutthe repetition.

“It turned out better than we’d thought,” he adds with typically English modesty. “When we started it we thought we were writing a kind of follow-up to *The Musical Box*, and it was going along quite nicely. Then we had this pretty-pretty song, *Willow*

Farm, on its own, and thought: what if we suddenly went from there into this ugly, descending-chords sequence? No one would be expecting it. Obviously that brought in all the louder electric instruments. And once we got into that, we thought: well, we're here now, let's carry on, with freedom, and see where it leads us. When we put the whole thing together and heard it back for the first time, we went: oh, this is actually pretty good."

"Most of *Apocalypse In 9/8* I'd got down as keyboard solos, but then Peter started singing over them, because his lyrics required more information to get out. Initially, I have to say, I was pissed off. 'You're singing on my bit!' Then I realised it now had all the excitement we'd been trying to create, especially the *666* section. You have a lot of drama in the chords themselves, then what he did on top just took it to another level. Yes, that half-minute or so is our peak."

"That was a great moment," says Rutherford,"… of luck. Because sometimes you don't quite know what you're doing. The end section happened, as often good music does, effortlessly. We wrote for a couple of months, but the act of doing that song seemed quite easy. If things takea long time it's a bad sign. When Pete put the *666* vocal on at the end, that was a bit special. I've had that moment twice in Genesis's history, where the game gets raised by a voice going on a strong instrumental and it's not how you imagined it at all. The other time was when Phil put the bit in the middle of *Mama*. Same sort of intensity."

Hackett has admitted that at first he thought the links on *Supper's Ready* were "too tenuous", while Collins says: "*Supper's Ready* was great. The music and imagery worked strongly together, and then on stage the visuals helped it along too."

Why don't bands make music of such ambition today? Why is ambition sneered at as 'pretentious'?

"Well," ponders Banks, "you're not allowed to. In the early 70s we were lucky. The Beatles had started to go a bit further, then pulled themselves back. But they'd opened a door. Which was followed up by bands like Pink Floyd, King Crimson, Family. We all thought: we can do what we like now! None of these albums sold that much, but we were building a following. Nowadays, you try giving people a 23-minute song that changes 15 minutes in but you've got to hear the first 14 minutes in order to fully appreciate that fifteenth minute – it's quite a commitment. Different things for different times."

Park life: Genesis enjoying some downtime in 1974.

GETTY X2

> **"There was a demarcation in the 1970s between bubblegum pop groups and serious, intense people like us!"**
> **Tony Banks**

Strangely, Genesis were now finding that following in America, which may be the reason they decided to make the fifth album a state-of-the-nation commentary on their homeland. Offering soon-to-be Genesis staples like *The Cinema Show*, *Firth Of Fifth* and *I Know What I Like* over accessible symphonic art-prog, *Selling England By The Pound* asked: "Can you tell me where my country lies?" with references to Romeo and Juliet, rival East End gangs, religious imagery (of course) and then-burgeoning supermarkets. Does it still stand up as a critiqueof an island under the occupation of brandsand corporations?

"Some of the lyrics don't deliver now, for me," shrugs Gabriel. "We'd have different approaches depending on who was writing, so I think the music stands up better in places."

You weren't the sole lyricist at this point?

"No, some are by the other guys. I did most of *The Lamb*, but Genesis had evolved, with all of us contributing ideas. I'd say Steve and Phil were doing less stuff, then gradually got more involved in the process as things went on."

Is *Aisle Of Plenty*, with the references to Tesco, Fine Fare, Safeway and the Co-Op, yours?

"Oh, okay, that's definitely me."

When *I Know What I Like* mowed in to the chart, Genesis declined to appear on *Top Of The Pops*. "It was a strange time in England," says Rutherford, "where there were pop acts who did singles – Mud, Pickettywitch – and album bands. There was a big line in the middle. You were one side or the other."

"There was a demarcation," agrees Banks. "Between bubblegum and serious, intense people like us! So we didn't go on *Top Of The Pops*, and Pan's People or whoever it was danced to the thing, which was… kind of strange. As the career went, it probably wasn't a bad decision. By the time we started to have hit singles regularly, the lines were down. The punk era of '77 had changed the landscape, and we were the last 'progressive' group left standing."

Long before that watershed, though, GenesisMk I delivered arguably their masterwork, the concept double album *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. It came out in November 1974 but, listening to it now, its age seems hard to believe. While it's sometimes erroneously pointed to as one of those grand overblown follies that earned prog the ridicule of the punk generation, it's in facta jittery, scratchy, energetic, eroticised flurry of shorter tracks, laced with ahead-of-its-time experimentation, and a fascinating collage of art-rock, synth-pop, pristine ballads and neo-industrial rhythms. It's as close to a movie as Genesis came. As far as the 'concept' hangs together, it tells of the identity-seeking quest of Rael, a young Puerto Rican living in New York City. He encounters characters ranging from the Lamia (borrowed from Greek mythology and Keats) to the Slippermen (grotesque, bulbous creatures: when Gabriel donned a costume as one, he had trouble getting the mic near his mouth).

"I have slight trouble with the story asa whole, but there are some great individual lyrics," recalls Banks. "It's a fairly unique album. It doesn't sound like anything else at all. Whereas our earlier albums were perhaps pastoral, sometimes floaty, this was more dark and aggressive; it was… of the city."

"I loved New York," states Peter Gabriel. "It was very seductive. It seemed Pure City, NY, in a way that London didn't: the energy, the excitement. Often in winter you'd have the steam coming out of the pavements and roads… it was a magical place. And I thought – although punk hadn't been invented then – that we needed a hero who was from the street, and not from some English manor house. So I wanted to shift it. There's probably some *West Side Story* in there too, and some *El Topo*. In essence it was an awakening – and a fairly violent one in places. Rael has to go on a journey to find himself: effectively, a coming-of-age. It still, strangely, seems to resonate with people around their early 20s – the age we were when writing it."

You related to Rael?

"Oh yeah. I think there was a bit of me in it. He was freer to live out things that I was never able to. I'm not sure if the story made much sense to people, but it meant something to me. Making a film of it still gets discussed from time to time. Maybe one day it'll happen: I'd enjoy seeing it visualised, if it was done correctly. Like, say, *Pan's Labyrinth*… the South American directors can conjure these fantastic worlds: passionate, violent, spiritual, all at the same time."

For all the album's jagged edges and creepy psycho-geography, perhaps the most durable cut of *The Lamb* has proven to be the absurdly beautiful, rippling-keyboard ballad *Carpet Crawlers*. What every Genesis fan has wondered for most ofa lifetime is: what were/are 'carpet crawlers'?

"Let me see," says Gabriel. "Again, I think it's about religion. It was probably some reference to Islamic prayer: the fact that there was this supplication, this sense that you had to crawl and bring yourself down to make an approach to… some unwritten law. That was part of the secret. There's a spiritual sojourn thread throughout."

"That was almost the most spontaneous track on the record!" smiles Tony Banks. "Pete had a couple of moments in his story where we didn't havea song. So Mike and I sort of built up this chord sequence, and said: 'Er, that's it.' Pete sang on top of it and it felt really good."

"With a double album," says Rutherford, "we felt we could be a little braver; experiment more. Then of course we went and played the entire thing live on tour in America, before the album was out.I'm laughing, thinking about it now, but that wasa hard tour."

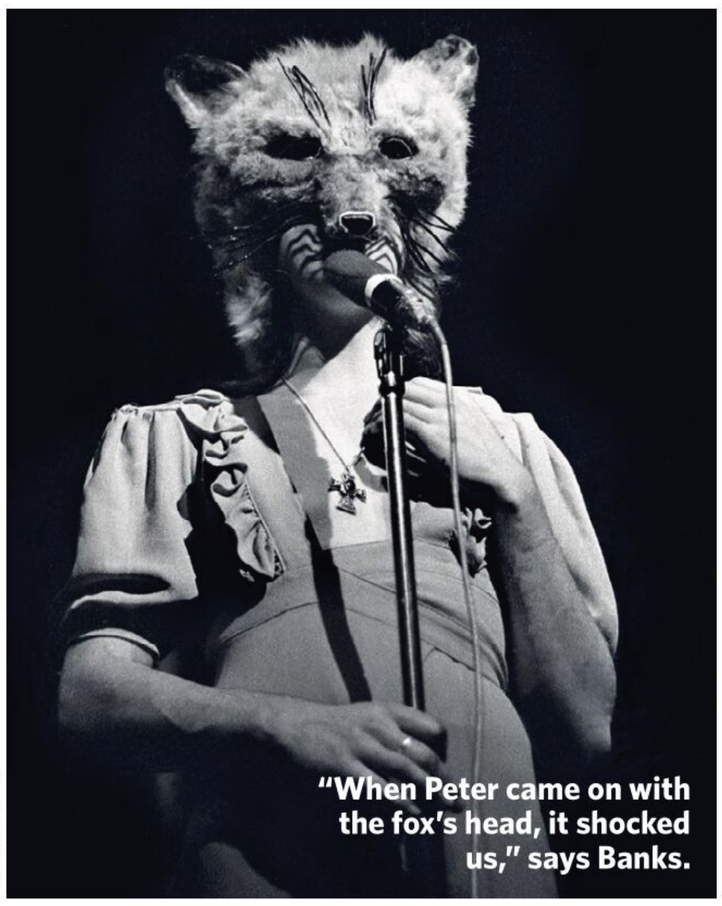
"Someone last night was telling me how much they love *Counting Out Time*," says Steve Hackett. "They went into a whole treatise about the musicality of it. And that's one of the lesser-known tracks. Funny, isn't it?" "The visuals may have got a little over-the-top with *The Lamb*," suggests Collins, "but that's the way it was at the time. Our main rehearsal base was in Dallas, Texas, and the Americans saw something interesting in us, but at the same time it wasn't what they were used to. We were pretty uncompromising. Sometimes it worked for us, sometimes against us. Recording *The Lamb* was more like us playing in a rehearsal room, or live, which is where we sounded best. As soon as we got into the studio I think everybody clammed up.I always felt we were close-but-no-cigar on record. But we did *The Lamb* at a farm in Wales with the Island mobile studio, so it was the closest to what we really sounded like. Much spontaneity, some of our strongest music. *Silent Sorrow In Empty Boats, The Waiting Room, In The Rapids* – there's some great moods on there. There weren't any disagreements, no – well, just about the protractor, obviously. At this period, though, we'd often be writing musicin one room with Peter writing lyrics in another…so one can look back and see where thetrip-wires were."

'We've got some in, we've got some out/ We've got some wild things floating about'
– Supper's Ready

Genesis played *The Lamb* live 102 times, pioneering the use of lasers and other lighting effects during the shows. It was an arduous tour; tensions mounted. Gabriel, who'd got married and experienced the difficult birth of his first child, told the others he wanted to leave when the tour ended. In an open music-press letter to fans (grandly named *Out, Angels, Out*), he wrote: '…the vehicle we'd built asa co-op to serve our songwriting became our master, and had cooped us up inside the success we'd wanted. It affected the attitudes and spirits of the whole band. The music had not dried up andI still respect the other musicians, but our roles had set in hard.' He took to parenthood and growing vegetables in a village near Bath, before beginning his solo career.

How did the others feel when he left? Anxious? Worried? Confident?

"All those things," says Banks. "Pete and I had been very close friends since the beginning. Possibly it got more difficult as time went by and the group



BARRIE WENTZELL

"When Peter came on with the fox's head, it shocked us," says Banks.

tended to be seen more as Pete's vehicle, despite our writing everything together, because he was visually so strong. So we wanted the opportunity to prove ourselves. And Peter had found it too restricting, frustrating, to be in a group. He wasn't allowed to touch a keyboard, for example, because that was my territory. When we were improvising, all he could do was sing and play flute and banga bass drum. And there were other things going on in his life. So it was time to go. We did try to persuade him not to, for all sorts of reasons. But once he'd gone we were keen to carry on."

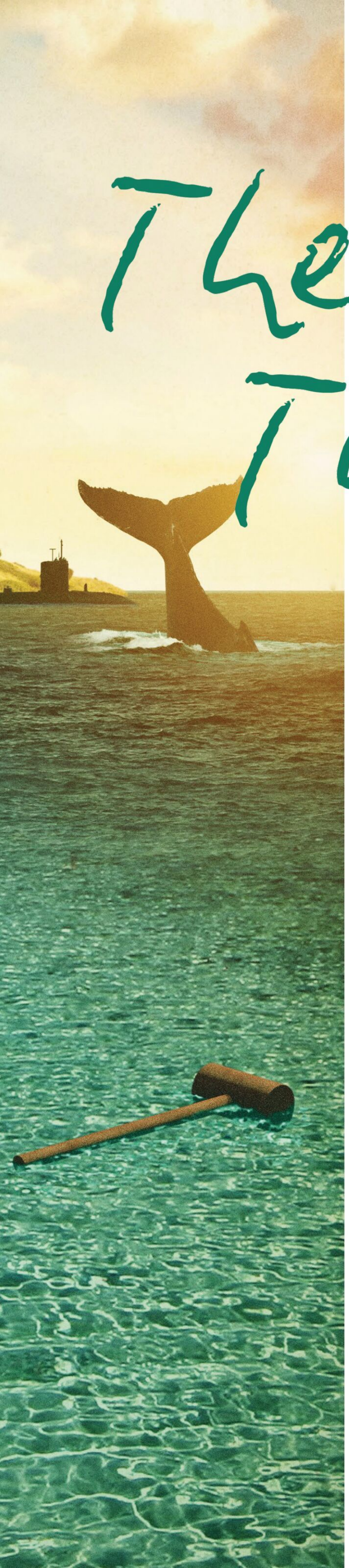
"At first we thought that was it," says Rutherford, by contrast. "A natural reaction. I mean, you don't *not* have that thought. But instead of making any big decision to carry on, we wrote songs. If they hadn't been good, I'm sure we'd have said: 'Y'know what? We've had our time. Move on.' But music flowed out, and sounded great."

"Peter had told us he was leaving while we were writing *The Lamb*, before we recorded it," recalls Collins. "Having played such a lot as a four-piece, with Peter in the other room, I just thought: well, we don't need a singer. Also, I was playing with ['jazz fusion' band] Brand X. So I went: let's just let people hear the music, show them it's not just Peter with some guys that play whatever he says.

"I don't mean that as it sounds. I love Peter dearly. There wasn't any animosity, ever, between him and me. I didn't want him to leave. And I certainly wasn't ambitious. I'd got myself a nice little reputation as a drummer, and I was happy, that was my security blanket. It didn't occur to me that we'd find someone else to sing. That was the last thing on my mind. I had no affinity with the idea of walking out from behind the drums and becoming a band's singer: the guy who wiggled his bum, who people looked at. Over the years there have been people claiming I nudged him out. That's total rubbish.

"There'd been a tacit agreement between Peter and us that we wouldn't announce his leaving until we had something to offer. And he was getting his first album together. But suddenly it burst onto the front page: 'Gabriel quits Genesis!' We were being written off as the band that couldn't possibly survive without its main man. We felt as if we'd lost the battle before we'd even had a chance to fight it."

Yet if only they could find a new singer, Genesis might have a chance of winning the war. Who could it be?



The Thrill of The Chase

October 6, 1972: **Genesis** release their fourth album, ***Foxtrot***, the record that will see their 'theatrical rock' tip over into bombastic costumery, Mellotron-steeped magnificence and the most feted prog suite in history, *Supper's Ready*. **Steve Hackett**, **Mike Rutherford**, **Tony Banks**, **Phil Collins** and **Peter Gabriel** tell how a futuristic prog classic blossomed.

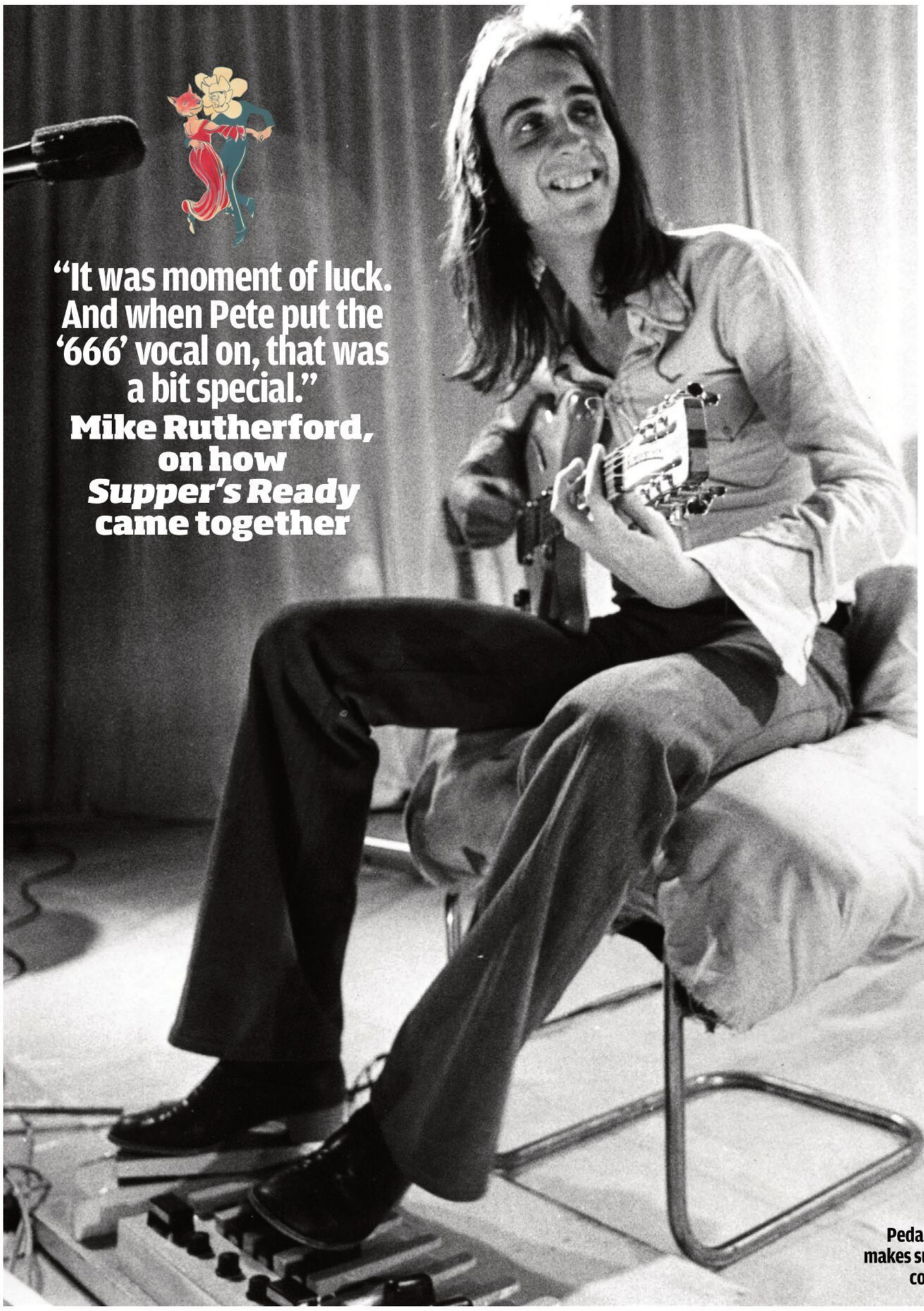
Leading the hunt: Chris Roberts **Illustration:** Sam Chivers/Magictorch

The foxtrot – the dance itself, which premiered just under a century ago – is usually defined as a smooth dance of long, continuous, flowing movements. Genesis' *Foxtrot*, which arrived 40 years ago, certainly has its long, continuous flowing movements, and much else besides. Today it sounds as unique, dramatic, thrilling and ambitious as ever. It's where the classic line-up of the band came fully into being; it's when they realised how much they could do, how far they could go. "It was about creating a film for the ear rather than the eye," says Steve Hackett. "And it even got to Number 12 in the charts," Tony Banks laughs. "Of course the next week it went down to Number 27 or something, but it was our first moment of scoring anything, so we felt that we were underway, that we were heading somewhere different. *Foxtrot* was where we first started, in my opinion, to become significant."

While all of its tracks are strong and inventive, *Foxtrot* is unavoidably dominated by the 23-minute seven-part suite which graced what used to be side two. *Supper's Ready* is one of the towering landmarks of prog, dovetailing short surreal pieces with moving neo-classical reprises and recapitulations, serene flows with shuddering staccato, parochial realism with pulchritudinous dreams. Across this fire from the skies, Peter Gabriel sings of battles between good and evil and love and war, of firemen, farmers, flowers (*'a flower?'*), and a frog who was a prince (who was a brick) (which was an egg) (which was a bird). And of 666 and a new Jerusalem. Startling then, it remains a stunning achievement of vision and scale. Roger Taylor of Queen has called it, "at separate times, homely, beautiful, tortured and epic." *'We've got everything,'* it declares presciently. *'We're growing everything...'*

"We were underway, we were heading somewhere different. *Foxtrot* was where we started to become significant."
Tony Banks

While *Supper's Ready* is the main course, *Foxtrot* should however be appreciated as more than just a set of appetisers leading up to it. It's strange to learn that the album came about in a relatively ramshackle manner: no great master plan had been conceived. The band sought a producer who could capture their improving live sound, and to that end had meetings or sessions with Paul Samwell-Smith,



“It was moment of luck. And when Pete put the ‘666’ vocal on, that was a bit special.”
Mike Rutherford, on how *Supper’s Ready* came together

Pedal power: Mike makes sure he’s extra comfy onstage.

Big Band theory: Phil gets rhythm.

Animal magic: Gabriel wears his wife’s dress for a brush with androgyny.

John Anthony and Bob Potter. None was quite the right fit so David Hitchcock, whose work with Caravan had impressed, came in, with the more outspoken engineer John Burns.

Steve Hackett was fatigued by the heavy touring schedule and still somewhat intimidated by his fellow band members’ prowess (“these guys are so good”, he’s recalled thinking). In 2012, having just re-recorded *Supper’s Ready* and others for his *Genesis Revisited II* album (see the feature following this), he remembers the steps towards *Foxtrot* more fondly. “There weren’t a lot of days off; we were a hard-working live band,” he says. “Whereas with its predecessor, *Nursery Cryme*, we’d taken the summer off and written and recorded together as a unit, bonding the team, this time we were on the run, in and out of the studio. I remember flying back from Italy to be in there a day or two ahead of the others, who were travelling by road, just to finish off my guitar parts on the end of *Supper’s Ready*.”

If there’s one album that doesn’t sound like a rush job, it’s *Foxtrot*...!

“Maybe not. But when you’ve done something, you know what your intention was. The perpetrators will always be looking for improvements. We generally agreed to a man that we recorded *Watcher Of The Skies* too fast. To my ears now it sounds like a young band desperate to get the notes right in a race to the finish. Once we’d been playing it live for a while, we relaxed into it and it sounded bigger. The version that ended up on *Genesis Live* is more in-the-pocket. That rhythm is almost impossible for any band to play perfectly! It’s full of pitfalls. Yet there’s lots of weird and wonderful stuff; it’s a band at its most creatively eccentric.”

Rehearsals (and writing sessions) in a variety of locations may have coloured the album’s angles and attitudes. Hackett recounts that *Foxtrot* was worked up in a variety of “drab, functional” places, until they moved (without Gabriel, who added the words later) to the Una Billings School Of Dance in Shepherd’s Bush. “There were girls dancing upstairs, learning their tap-dance and what-have-you. And the sound of that, those rhythms, would come down through the ceiling. We were below in

“We were not one of those boring bands that went diddly-diddly-diddly on the guitar. We did not do that!”
Phil Collins

what had been a refectory, so you had a counter here and a gobstopper-dispensing machine there. It was all a bit strange, and the atmosphere influenced our subsequent efforts. Much of *Supper's Ready* was written in the two weeks there. With the tap-dancing upstairs, you couldn't be too serious for long, because you'd hear them: clumpety clump clump. That rhythm would kick in, and we'd have to break into smiles…"

Watcher Of The Skies had grown out of Banks "fooling around" with the Mellotron. "We bought one of the ex-King Crimson Mellotrons," he notes, "and Robert Fripp insisted it was the one they'd used on *In The Court Of The Crimson King*. Mind you, he had three, and I'm sure he said that about all of them when he was selling them." Hackett too emphasises the importance of that instrument to the album. "I'd kept hammering on that we should get one, saying it'd make our story-telling abilities so much greater. It meant that the band could function as a time machine, with all these various mythologies. The idea was that all the old instruments were there within the Frankenstein that was the Mellotron. It was like an alien orchestra being beamed to you by satellite. And you need to be able to smell the dust from time to time. It had a… cold warmth. I think it's actually the most influential keyboard instrument in the whole of rock." Banks reckons people had never heard "a big, big sound like that" before. It brought the album in with an impossible-to-ignore surge.

"*Time Table, Get 'Em Out By Friday* and *Can-Utility And The Coastliners* don't get as much attention as the others," agrees Hackett, "but they're all part of the journey." Not least because of Gabriel's always busy, multi-voiced lyrics. "Yes, there's important social comment on *Get 'Em Out*…, and the rest is hardly boy-meets-girl, is it? And the sci-fi elements show that mythology doesn't have to be backward looking. *Time Table* has something: there's a magic between the piano and the six-string electric. It chimes. You get that third instrument — not piano, not guitar — where the distinction between them is blurred. The ensemble work welds instruments together, grafts them onto each other like that *Star Trek* mind-meld. It's not so much an album of solos."

"We were not," says Phil Collins, "one of those boring bands that went diddly-diddly-diddly on the guitar. We did not do that!" He also suggests that *Get 'Em Out By Friday* would have made for a great Big Band arrangement. "I was listening to Count Basie and Buddy Rich when we recorded that, but that sort of thing didn't appeal to the Genesis sensibility."

Hackett likes the term "lead chords". "Genesis constructed melodies from chords. On *Can-Utility*… for example you get those syncopated orchestral moments. We'd have that 'swirly-cloudy' feel that was such a part of it, that impressionistic feel where you're not certain what you're listening to. That characterises a lot of *Nursery Cryme* and *Foxtrot*."

Meanwhile Mike Rutherford emphasises the compositional craft. "Which is why I never really got the "prog" tag. Some of the progressive bands were more about musicianship. Even though we did long numbers, they were strongly song-driven. That's the key to longevity."

Yet for all the merits of the supporting-cast songs, the march towards *Supper's Ready* always has that Everest on the horizon. Indeed *Horizons*, Hackett's instrumental (influenced by Bach), which precedes it, in his view "works as an hors d'oeuvre, it becomes part of it, an introduction." And then the breathtaking ascent begins.

Peter Gabriel remains proud of it. "It did feel like we captured some emotion there, particularly at the climax," he tells me. "For my part it was influenced by John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* — as was *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. It was this idea of a journey. And we were then trying, consciously, to break out of tradition: throwing together different ideas and influences to see if there was a fresh way of putting them all together. I still enjoy it; I'm still attracted to it." In fact Gabriel has considered playing it in recent years, but admits it was rather tough for his band to learn. "There was some resistance. It's not easy! It's still something I wouldn't mind looking at one day…"

"Days off from touring were few. To my ears now it sounds like a young band desperate to get the notes right in a race to the finish!"
Steve Hackett

"It's the stuff of symphonies and concertos!"
The Majesty Of *Supper's Ready*.

Flowered-up: Genesis perform *Supper's Ready* in 1973.

GETTY IMAGES X4

Steve Hackett: I can't remember whose idea it was, but we came to the conclusion that you could join any two bits of music together, no matter how disparate the styles, provided the bridge or atmospheric link was strong enough. So we were working on the idea of the musical continuum without naming it as such. And of course that journeying approach - even if it's been much disparaged by some since – it creates for the listener an adventure, an odyssey. Themes reappear. First you might hear them in a bare stripped-back way; then they return with the full Mellotron treatment. With glory! In a sense, the effect when they come back is like when memories become sweeter with time. You've got the stuff of symphonies and concertos.

So there's a nod to the past, but *Supper's Ready* was quite futuristic at that point. Bands just weren't creating pieces of music like that. I think it was then the longest piece that any rock band had ever played live. We were echoing the freedom that music (and education) had in the 60s, so you had surrealistic elements, psychedelic elements, experiments, almost obscurantist aspects.

Tony Banks: Most of *Apocalypse In 9/8*… I'd got down as keyboard solos, but then Peter started singing over them, because his lyrics required more information to get out. Initially, I have to say, I was pissed off, because he was singing on "my" bit! Then I realised it now had all the excitement we'd been trying to create, especially the '666' section. You have a lot of drama in the chords themselves, then what he did on top just took it to another level. That half-minute or so is our peak.

Mike Rutherford: That was a great moment of luck. Sometimes, you don't quite know what you're doing. The end section happened effortlessly, as good music often does. We wrote for a couple of months, but the act of doing that song seemed quite easy. If things take a long time it's a bad sign. When Pete put the '666' vocal on, that was a bit special. I've had that moment twice in Genesis' history, where the game gets raised by a voice going on a strong instrumental and it's not how you imagined it at all. (The other time was when Phil put the bit in the middle of *Mama*). Same sort of intensity."

Tony Banks: "In the early 70s we were lucky. The Beatles had started to go a bit further, then pulled themselves back. But they'd opened a door. Which was followed up by bands like Pink Floyd, King Crimson, Family. We all thought: we can do what we like now! None of these albums sold that much, but we were building a following. Nowadays, you try giving people a 23-minute song that changes 15 minutes in but you've got to hear the first 14 minutes in order to fully appreciate that 15th minute – it's quite a commitment! Different things for different times." **CR**

GUARANTEED ETERNAL SANCTUARY

"It's a bit like restoring old furniture, " says **ReGenesis' man Nigel Appleton**.

In at least one respect, the renowned Gabriel-era tribute band ReGenesis have the originals licked. The band's classic 1970s line-up played live for five years. ReGenesis are now 18.

What's more, they've just finished one of their most ambitious tours to date. *Foxtrot At Forty* saw the quintet perform the whole of the venerable 1972 album as the second half of their set, although as drummer Nigel Appleton points out, most of it has long been a live staple.

"There's only one song on that album we'd never played before, which is *Time Table*," he says. "I don't think there's any record of Genesis playing that live. It can be a big mission to learn stuff for albums, but on this occasion, all the other songs are regulars.

"*Watcher Of The Skies* has been the first song on so many of our gigs. It's instant atmosphere, it's doom-laden yet sci-fi. I do enjoy playing *Get 'Em Out By Friday*, it's one we seem to be able to pull off especially well."

ReGenesis: In bloom, once again.

Regenesis have the enthusiastic endorsement of Steve Hackett, who even wrote the sleeve notes for their *Live At The Empire* album. "He's been very complimentary, and he always comes along," says keyboard player Doug Melbourne, who agrees that ReGenesis have become the keepers of a particular flame.

"Sometimes I think of it a bit like being classical musicians," he says. "No one has a go at an orchestra for doing a bit of Beethoven. Or it's a bit like restoring old furniture, polishing up these bits that have been rather neglected over the years." **PS**

Find ReGenesis at: www.regenesis-band.co.uk

COURTESY OF RE-GENESIS/PRESS

Floral dance: from *Foxtrot* came *that* look...

Banks remembers how its disparate aspects came together as a song cycle. "We wanted to go further. We'd all been wanting to push away from regular structures. We'd wonder why you had to go verse-chorus-verse-chorus-etc. It's nice to go somewhere else! You can tell more of a story without that repetition. We started thinking we were writing a follow-up to *The Musical Box*, but then we had this very pretty song, *Willow Farm*, too — and wondered: what if we suddenly went from there into this ugly descending-chords sequence? With all the louder, electric instruments entering. Nobody would be expecting it. Once we were into that, we thought: well, we're here now, let's carry on with that freedom and see where it leads. It turned out better than we thought." With customary English restraint, he adds, "When we put the whole thing together and heard it back for the first time, we went: oh! This is actually pretty good!"

Collins, who can be lukewarm on some material of that Genesis era and doesn't listen to it often, says, "*Supper's Ready* was great. The music and imagery worked strongly together, and then on stage the visuals boosted it too." Hackett backs that up. "It wasn't until we were playing it live, with the visual presentation and Peter's showmanship, that it somehow found favour. We were described as "theatrical rock" long before the term "progressive rock" was used. At first when the album came out, we were sometimes playing this stuff to crowds who were just... indifferent."

"We were then trying to break out of tradition: throwing together different ideas and influences to see if there was a fresh way of putting them all together."
Peter Gabriel

So how was the response to *Foxtrot* upon initial release? Were people dazzled, confused, appalled, or exhilarated? Or just indifferent?

"All of those things," muses Hackett. "Don't forget, we weren't The Beatles. Just before they released *Sgt Pepper*, they worried whether they'd gone too far and whether the crowd might give them the thumbs-down. We felt in a similar position. It was early days for the band. We just weren't sure. We'd really gone out on a limb with *Supper's Ready*, it was labyrinthine with layers, and it was by no means certain that the response would be positive."

Of course Paul Whitehead's surrealist sleeve design is as much a part of the *Foxtrot* "immersion" experience as that pyramid-prism is to *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. Gabriel certainly dived in, courageously donning his wife's red dress and a fox-head for stage shows. "It's interesting how the most cherished albums have the most cherished sleeves," ponders Hackett. "I think for fans of it there was always that feeling of looking at it and thinking: I'm onto something here that other people don't necessarily know about. One's taste becomes tribal: these albums become important bonding

"We'd really gone out on a limb with *Supper's Ready*. It was labyrinthine with layers, and it was by no means certain that the response to it would be positive."
Steve Hackett

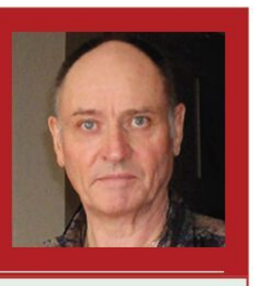
elements. Where language leaves off, music begins, and you share a dream."

A dream that's lasted 40 years and counting, in the case of *Foxtrot*...

"Musicians do tend to disparage their early work: the need to continually move forward can be everything. I prefer to celebrate it, and look for what's right about it. If you have passion, energy and honesty you will come up with something valuable. You don't always verbalise it as a band, you try to do things instinctively, listening closely to each other without ego - and sometimes you get a great crystallisation. You may not recognise it at the time, you might think it was just a doodle, but someone else will see it as a full-blown portrait, a *Mona Lisa*. The musicians might still be searching, but the audience, the true owners, will say: look no further. We've found it."

SUPER FURRY MANIMAL

"I felt like part of the band!" Paul Whitehead on Genesis' prog art explosion.



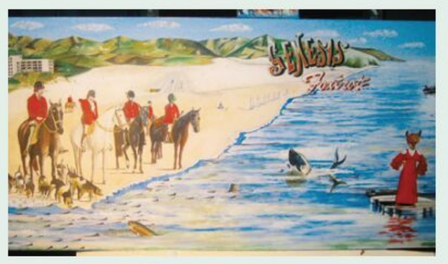
The memorable visuals of the *Foxtrot* album were the work of British designer Paul Whitehouse. "I did the two previous albums, Trespass and *Nursery Cryme*," he says from his home in California. "I was the in-house art guy for Charisma. Four of the five guys were public schoolboys, so they decided to have a go at English institutions. *Nursery Cryme* was croquet, being the utmost upperclass game.

"Then they said 'What are we going to do for the next album?' and I suggested foxhunting. They said 'What original take have you got on foxhunting that will apply to this record?' In those days, I had friends in British rock bands that had toured America. I was very friendly with Keith Relf from the Yardbirds, who came back using the phrase 'She's such a fox'. It was a new expression for England.

"So it was like, why not have the fox disguise himself as a woman, to get away? Then of course Peter Gabriel did the red dress on stage, with the mask, so that added to it. Supper's Ready was a whole 23-minute thing with multiple costume changes, which I helped with as well.

"I always felt like I was part of the band, because I was included in meetings, and they'd give me the song lyrics as they were doing them. So I was in the loop, and we got on very well.

"But a lot of people didn't see the connection to the record, which has no mention of foxhunting. It was purposely enigmatic." **PS**



Evolution of a canvas: although the *Foxtrot* artwork disappeared, Paul took pictures of its progress.

Find Mr Whitehead at www.paulwhitehead.com

GETTY IMAGES

PAUL WHITEHEAD/PRESS

THE PROG INTERVIEW

TONY BANKS

In 2018, *Prog* met keyboard legend **Tony Banks** to discuss his new classical work before pulling back the camera to look at everything from the ups and downs of Genesis' extraordinary career and achievements to the relationships between the personnel, his fondness for bread bins and double glazing, and what it's like to be critiqued by an American psycho.

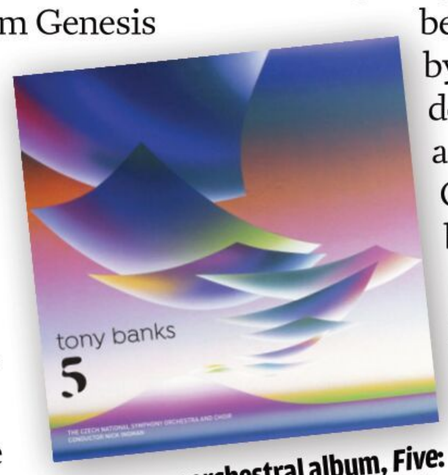
Words: Chris Roberts **Portraits:** Kevin Nixon

Tony Banks arrives at the swish, futuristic London members' club carrying a free newspaper in one hand and dressed in black. He's a youthful 67 (68 this month) and, belying any reputation for quintessentially English reserve, happily talks 19 to the dozen. He's pleased, too, to lay eyes on a CD of his new orchestral album *Five* for the first time, though we spend a moment pining for the grander artwork of vinyl releases. *Five* — a set of (count 'em) five grandiose symphonic compositions — is both a long way from Genesis and yet, in its essence, a kindred swell of beauty and pathos.

Banks was, of course, key to (and keyboardist with) Genesis since their formation in 1967. From Charterhouse to revelation, from theatrical and experimental prog to a sharper focus and massive global success, from *Supper's Ready* to *Invisible Touch*, he was always there, vital as a writer and player, the king of chords and key changes.

He may not have had the high profile of the band's frontmen, but he's been a sort of éminence grise, the power behind the throne. As Phil Collins has said, "Ever tried making Tony do something he doesn't want to? Won't happen."

Banks reckons that by not being recognised in the street, being able to travel by Tube unbothered despite being a Rock'n'Roll Hall Of Famer, he has the best of both worlds.



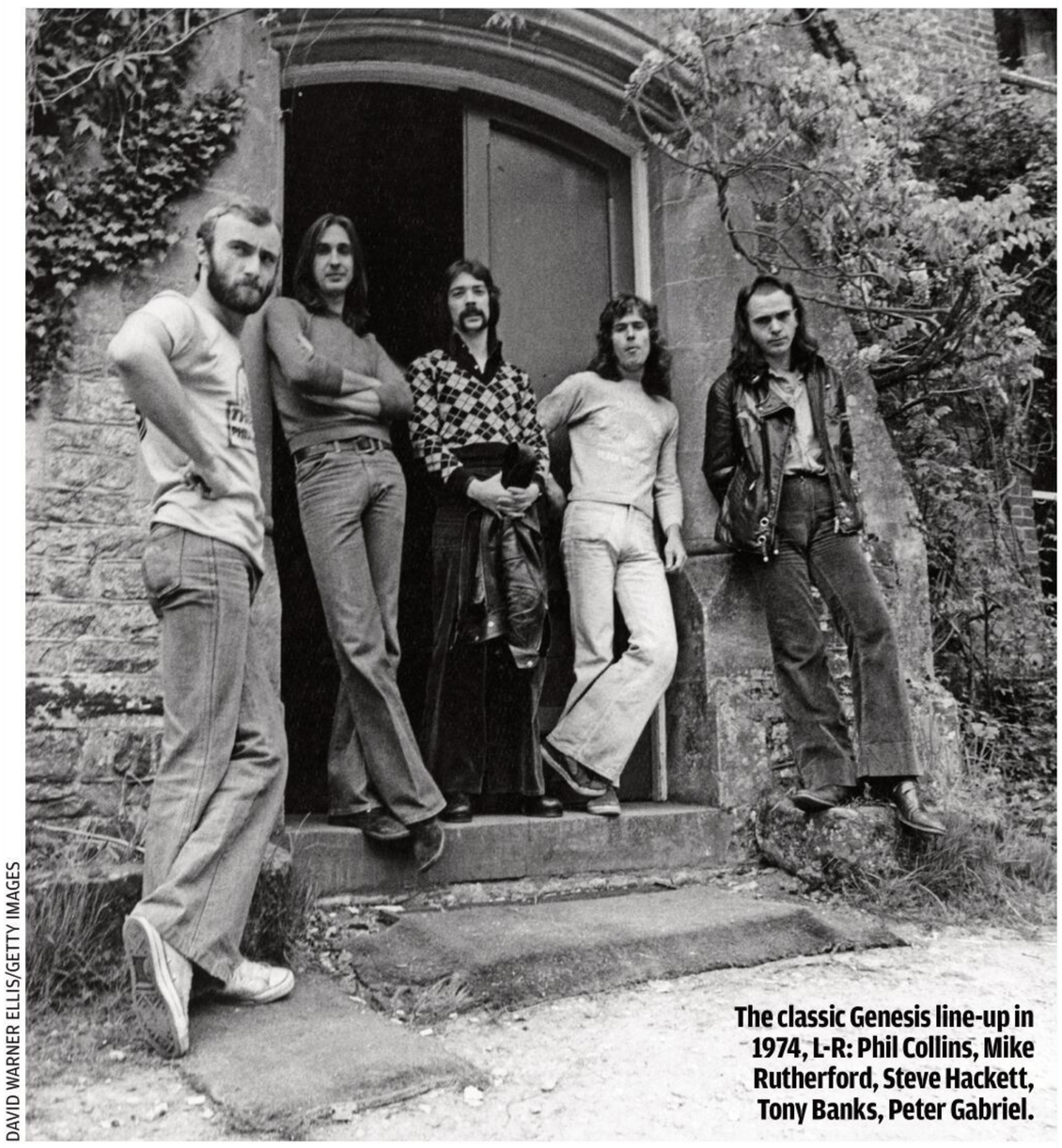
Banks' new orchestral album, Five: "There's no Firth Of Fifth here..."

While on his previous album, *Six Pieces For Orchestra*, he composed but didn't play, he's very much playing on this one.

"I am, but people shouldn't get too excited," he smiles. "The piano isn't dominant, as such. My parts are a continuum, holding the thing together. But, you know, there's no *Firth Of Fifth* here. That's not the intention. It's orchestral music."

Prog finds out more...

> Genesis have always been a rather divisive band, at least our more extreme ends. And I've always been happy with that.


DAVID WARNER ELLIS/GETTY IMAGES

The classic Genesis line-up in 1974, L-R: Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford, Steve Hackett, Tony Banks, Peter Gabriel.

When you were first discovering music, what were your first loves? Rock'n'roll or Ravel?

Well, the first thing I was ever aware of was show tunes, which my mother played at home — early Rodgers & Hammerstein stuff. And I heard a lot of hymns at school. Then my brother had a few records and I got into pop music. We both loved a version of *Sixteen Tons* by Frankie Laine. It's not even the best-known version of that song, but I just played it to death, going: "This is fantastic!"

Then I listened to *Pick Of The Pops* with Alan Freeman. It was 1961, I was 11 years old. I heard a chart where *The Young Ones* by Cliff Richard was No.1 and I loved everything — Acker Bilk's *Stranger On The Shore*, Bobby Darin's *Multiplication*, Elvis' *Rock-A-Hula Baby*. I had no discrimination at all, thought it was all wonderful!

The first record I bought was *The Wanderer* by Dion. Of course, it's an incredibly simple 12-bar blues, but done with a great sound, great effects. I was hooked from then on — a complete fanatic for music from about 11 to 17. But then I got more discriminatory as time went by, and found more and more things I didn't like...

Ah, the passing of innocence!

Yes, but then that early era of the groups in England — Beatles, Kinks, Animals, Stones — was so exciting. From the background I had, it was never something that ever seemed a possibility. When we were at school we *dreamed* of being this thing. Because I could play by ear, I loved working out Beatles songs from the radio. I started to understand the structures, and the idea of

Tony Banks: orchestral manoeuvrer in the dark.

writing our own songs emerged with Peter [Gabriel], one of my closest friends. We started trying weirder chords, seeing what worked.

Ten years later, by the mid-70s, whereas I'd liked everything when younger, I disliked most things, felt I'd heard it all before. Once you've heard the pattern of *The Wanderer* a dozen times, it gets a little dull. So you start looking to do different things.

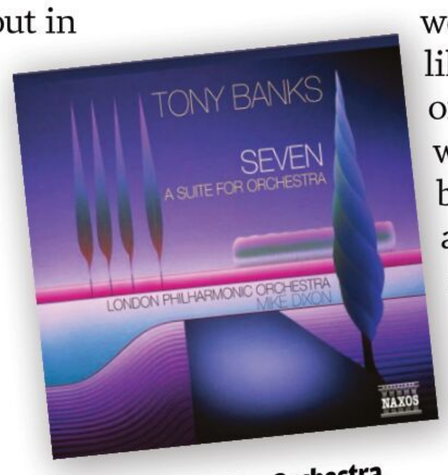
And once we were a group, we were quite competitive with the groups we'd come in with – Family, Pink Floyd, King Crimson. A lot of bands had guitarists who'd just go nuts for ages, and I'd think, "Yeah, I've heard that now."

You've done orchestral albums called *Seven*, then *Six*, and now *Five*. Are you getting closer to achieving your exact aims?
The first one was a learning process. The second one was more involved. With this one, I decided to go about it slightly more like I used to do solo albums and some Genesis stuff, where you put down a framework first. I did the piano and a lot of orchestration at home, so the structure, the template, was there. The original piano part stays in. I could control the tempos while letting it breathe. On the other ones, some pieces came out like I'd intended, others not quite. This is closer to how I envisaged it.

The first seeds for the album were sewn in Cheltenham...
Yes, the opening piece of *Five*, now called *Prelude To A Million Years* – unpretentiously, of course – was started for the Cheltenham Music Festival in 2014. It was quite traumatic for me to hear the orchestra playing it. It worked, but there's always compromises. So here, working with the experienced Nick Ingham, we made what I'd written make sense for the full orchestra. We recorded the parts separately, more like the mechanics of a band. So I'm happy – if I fail, it's on my own terms.

***Five* does have that distinctive Banksean, melancholy feel...**
Hmm... wistful, nostalgic, perhaps, rather than melancholy. I've always been a nostalgic person. Lyrics like *Fading Lights* for Genesis were all about looking back on life, how things could have been different. But the attitude is usually one of 'it all worked out in the end'. There's a shape to this album, with *Prelude*, then *Reveille*, an awakening, then *Ebb And Flow* moving forward to *Autumn Sonata*, towards the end of life, and finally *Renaissance*, my favourite, which is a kind of rebirth, both an end and a beginning. That one moves from moody to optimistic – it could have been worked into a prog piece, I suppose!

Tony Banks' *Six Pieces For Orchestra* album from 2012.



Seven: A Suite For Orchestra, Banks' 2004 release.

Didn't you initially write some of it during the Genesis years?
Oh, I know that's been said, but just the first minute or so was written when I was trying to get into film music, so... the late 90s. I was listening to an old tape, a mix of strange drone and sweet melody, and I thought, "I can go somewhere with this."

Yes, if you wanted to, you could do it with drums and vocals and stuff, but... I just love the expansiveness of an orchestra. Not that I've ever felt particularly constrained, but in a pop song you're almost obliged to repeat things: choruses, middle eights. And I've always been happiest just sort of... rambling on.

So this genre is more in tune with your natural proclivities?
In a way, yes. I mean, I love writing songs too. Poets used to love writing sonnets as well as epics, you know? I'm very proud of some of the songs I've been involved in. In the old days, when we did something like *Supper's Ready* or *The Musical Box*, we'd go on and on, but if repeating a phrase, we'd do a totally different arrangement of it. *Supper's Ready* is the prime example, where the final section is a reprise of an earlier part but done a lot better to really give you that... feel.

"I just love the expansiveness of an orchestra. Not that I've ever felt particularly constrained, but in a pop song you're almost obliged to repeat things: choruses, middle eights. And I've always been happiest just sort of... rambling on."
KEVIN NIXON

There was always method in the madness. Non-fans seem to think early Genesis waffled on randomly, but it was all about the carefully built structure.
It's a funny old thing, isn't it? I had to be really cajoled into doing a solo, the first time. I was eventually persuaded to do one on *Stagnation* on *Trespass* – it was quite a thing for me! I got this first phrase which worked, then pretty much played scales and arpeggios for the rest of it! Anyway, then I had a clue. And okay, it became a *part* of Genesis, but we always wanted a freedom, a fluidity. Some of the bands we were compared to – ELP, Yes at times – would have a solo just

Prog God 2015: Tony Banks receiving his prestigious award from Peter Gabriel.
JO HALE/GETTY IMAGES

Tony Banks shot exclusively for *Prog*, January 2018.

because Keith [Emerson] or Steve [Howe] was a good musician. We never did that. Probably because neither Steve [Hackett] nor I wanted to be out front.

I know there are long keyboard sections like on *The Cinema Show*, but they had a purpose. And on *Supper's Ready*, things grow from lighter to heavier until you get to the real climax, with the '*666*' section. Some of your readers may know that piece! You get this massive, dramatic C chord, then Peter starts singing over the top. Initially I didn't want him spoiling my chords [laughs] but then I realised how good it was.

That's how you work as a group sometimes — you're fighting against each other but the combination of those impulses produces something special.

Was it more of a boon or a traffic jam that all your personnel were highly talented individuals?

No one was carried: everyone was involved. The combination all round was interesting. But in a way that's *why* the five-piece had to become a four-piece, then a three-piece — just too many ideas in there. Three of us was okay, because we covered all the bases. And fortunately we had a fantastic drummer who could sing! It was a good unit, that. I loved all the periods of Genesis really.

I once asked you why people don't often make music like *Supper's Ready* any more, and you said people weren't allowed to. Can you elaborate on what you meant by that?

In the late 70s, there was a reaction against groups like us, which in a way was fair enough. The other thing is these pieces never get played. Back in '72 or '73, on Capitol Radio, *Stairway To Heaven* was voted best song of all time and number two was... *Supper's Ready*. Now *Stairway To Heaven* is on the radio all the time, but *Supper's Ready*? It's simply too long! People's attention spans, especially now with Spotify and the rest, are three or four minutes tops.

The current pop formula works, sells billions, but it must be so boring to write. Half the fun of constructing a song, for me, is moving away from the theme and then coming back to it again in an exciting way. Masters like Holland-Dozier-Holland and Burt Bacharach could do that. Take it away, then bring it back better. I love that, in all forms of music.

One of your finest compositions that goes (comparatively) under the radar is *Mad Man Moon* from *A Trick Of The Tail*...

Some get less attention than others. Of course, we never played it live, so there's that. It's more, dare I say, a feminine track. Melancholy. I was very pleased when I wrote it, especially the verses. The noodling in the middle is quite fun, but if you listen carefully, it's beyond my playing ability! As for the line *'A muddy pitch in Newcastle'*, I've had a few phrases that you really shouldn't. *'Bread bin'* in *All In A Mouse's Night*. *'Double glazing'* in *Domino*. You either like

those lines sticking out or you don't. Anyway, Genesis have always been a rather divisive band, at least our more extreme ends. And I've always been happy with that.

Across the band's lifespan, you evolved from songs based on fables and Bible stories to lyrics addressing real relationships and the modern world. Is it fair to say we hear you all, for better or worse, growing up in public?
That's absolutely true. I mean, we came out of Charterhouse public school incredibly repressed and naïve. Whatever the opposite of streetwise is, we were it. We didn't have the courage to write 'I love you baby' at all. So we went towards Ovid and Greek myths, Narcissus and the rest, and used that. Up to *A Trick Of The Tail*, we – bar the odd song – stayed out of reality. Even on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, it was still dressed up as fantasy.

It wasn't until confidence came and we were feeling more at home with life that I wrote a genuine 'love gone wrong' song, which was *Many Too Many*. At the same time, Mike [Rutherford] wrote *Follow You Follow Me*. There was less hiding behind myths and legends; we could move in a more straightforward direction.

And that new direction won you a whole new audience?
I'd say it doubled our audience! A lot of females had found us… fairly impenetrable. *The Fountain Of Salmacis*: what the hell was that all about? But we now pulled in people to like the other stuff as well. At our shows we'd do old and new. Although, at that last tour in 2007, we'd do long instrumentals like *Duke's Travels* and half the audience would go for a loo break. Then the next song was *Hold On My Heart*, and the other half would go. I like it all; I'd have stayed put for all of it!

We'd have done more UK shows on that tour, but we had a funny idea of what our status was. A lot of the cognoscenti don't like us – they never got over the fact that we survived 1977, and we were Public Enemy No.1 at that time. So we've always had a strange image here. But the way it went, we felt we could've done more and it would've been nice. But it wasn't to be. And it probably was the last one.

A Step Ahead: from prog to pop and now classical, Banks is always progressing.

KEVIN NIXON X2

Really? So there'll be no more Genesis gigs, ever?
I mean, poor Phil, he's not going to be able to drum again. He can sing, but… we'll see.

Have you been to any of his solo concerts?
Yes. They're going pretty well, I think, after a slightly shaky start. I saw him at the Albert Hall before he had a fall and had to cancel a couple. It was okay: it wasn't brilliant. Great musicians, effects and lights. He was singing fine, very warmly. It's just… you wanted him to be leaping around doing the tambourine dance, y'know? Can't do that any more, I'm afraid.

Have you seen Steve Hackett's Genesis Revisited shows?
I haven't, no. Haven't seen him live for years actually. It's great that they're playing those songs though. There is an irony to it, in that Steve's the one playing this stuff and he *left* the band! But I heard their version of *Afterglow* on the radio: that sounded good.

Genesis fans will never agree on the best album, or even the best era. Is that a help or a hindrance?
I remember when *Abacab* came out, we had about eight albums in the Top 100. People went back and discovered the earlier ones, which is great. But we don't sell much these days. We never had that definitive album the way Floyd had *The Dark Side Of The Moon* or the Eagles had *Hotel California*. Again, we're… divisive. We haven't got that universality of somebody like Queen, who everybody likes to some degree. We were considered too fey to be street cred, so some like us, some don't.

You played four nights at Wembley Stadium in 1987, though, which was a record back then. Was that a fun experience?
Very unusually for us and outdoor events, the weather was good. Those big shows aren't the greatest musically, but they are a celebration. You get into the spirit with the audience. I remember coming off after the last show, thinking, "Oh well, there's no way we're ever going to be this big again! We've peaked." That said, we sustained reasonably well with *We Can't Dance*. It was an extraordinary time. We'd begun by playing noodly, obscure music with no image, not even changing to go onstage, and here we were. Sometimes I'd make myself look at it as an outsider, a spectator, and I enjoyed that.

I was never a natural performer, never a show-off, but I found a way of coping. If I did what I *can* do, which is play, I was always confident the others would make it work.

Together And Apart: Genesis at the launch of *that* documentary.

> Some of the bands we were compared to – ELP, Yes at times – would have a solo just because Keith Emerson or Steve Howe was a good musician. We never did that. Probably because neither Steve Hackett nor I wanted to be out front.

Is it fair to say you didn't think the 2014 *Together And Apart* documentary worked?
We were disappointed with that. Mike and I saw it about a week before it came out, and it was… terrible. So we quickly got a new director and recut it, and it was better, but things were in there that shouldn't have been. We'd done better documentaries in the past, like 2008's *Come Rain Or Shine*, which shows the hilarious minutiae. But we didn't feel good about this one.

With the solo careers, originally it only focused on Phil and Peter. Mike and I managed to get us in, but of course we didn't get Steve in, which was a mistake. We did try. But overall the thing didn't do its job. There were some witty things said, and it was nice to have us all in a room together again. And when everyone pointed out that I shouted the loudest to get my own way, I took it as a compliment – it suggests I'm more responsible for the music!

How did you feel about Genesis being analysed by serial killer turned music critic Patrick Bateman in the controversial novel *American Psycho*?
Well… it was strange, but interesting. That character's not very likeable, to put it mildly, but he loves Genesis and contrasts our old and new music in detail. So it was oddly flattering, but in a backhanded way. Hey, getting mentioned at all is nice!

As the recipient of 2015's Prog God award, you got more than mentioned…
Yes, fantastic! I was surprised. I've always stayed in the background to some extent, so am never quite sure if people are aware of how much I do. And with Peter presenting it, it gave us a chance to make jokes about each other. We have a good relationship. Obviously we don't see each other like we used to, but when we do, we go back to that close friendship we had very quickly.

So what's next for you? After *Five*, will you go forth to *Four*?
Oh, I do this because I love to, and because I can afford to on the back of what I've done in the past. It isn't a commercial proposition, really. Maybe it's an ego trip, which is fine. When my earlier solo albums did nothing, it was like beating myself up. But *Six* got to No.1 in the classical charts, and there's interest from more than just loyal Genesis collectors. So that's great. And once *Five* is out, I'll no doubt feel cravings again…

"I was playing guitar in the best band in the world."
– Steve Hackett

Steve Hackett on stage with Genesis at London's Theatre Royal in 1974.

Citizens Of Hope And Glory

There are obsessives for every Genesis album, but ***Selling England By The Pound***, released in 1973, resonates deeply across the spectrum of the group's admirers. In 2018, guitarist **Steve Hackett** looked back on the enduring legacy of this prog rock classic.

Words: Daryl Easlea

In 1973, Britain was at a crossroads. The Conservative government seemed to be losing control of the various industrial disputes that raged in a union-dominated workplace; inflation was spiralling due to the increasing global economic crisis. Value Added Tax (VAT) had been introduced at the start of April 1973, and the cost of living seemed to be one of the premium topics of conversation; credit cards were becoming ever more popular and national debt was spiralling. The United Kingdom was also engaged in a debate about whether they should remain in the 'Common Market' – the European Economic Community – which it had joined on New Year's Day 1973. There was a feeling that the very nature of Britishness was being eroded. In short, it seemed as if we were all going to hell in a handcart. Sound familiar?

With all of this being played out across the media, for Genesis writing about beheadings during croquet games at once seemed perhaps too frivolous, too escapist. Taking its title from a slogan in the Labour Party's manifesto, *Selling England By The Pound*, the band's fifth studio album is infused with a whimsy, a Britain at sunset, assessing how to move forward in shifting times. The word 'pound' in its title was key; aside from the obvious pun between currency and weight, the pound sterling had been one of the hottest political topics in recent history. In the preceding decade it had been devalued, decimalised and floated. Harold Wilson's phrase, "the pound in your pocket," said in 1967 when the pound was devalued by 14% to foreign markets (but still worth the same in the UK) had stuck in popular consciousness, and with a collective focus on thrift and economy, set against the financial crisis, the album's title had a snappy, contemporary feel. "*Selling England* was *very* English," Steve Hackett says. "It wasn't bucket and spade English… it was this other sense."

The story of *Selling England By The Pound* begins with a paucity of material and delay. It's strange now to think that three months seemed an eternity then: but Genesis were blocked. Coming off the triumphant *Foxtrot* tour, a proposed gig at Wembley Empire Pool in May 1973 had to be nixed because tickets couldn't be printed in time. As the band didn't have a huge stock of material prepared, the stop-gap in-concert album *Genesis Live* was released that July to capitalise on their burgeoning success. Sold at a budget price, it became the group's first UK Top 10 album.

What was to become *Selling England By The Pound* was rehearsed in a friend's home near Chessington Zoo, Surrey, across early summer 1973. "We were literally in the living room of a family house," Steve Hackett says. "Inevitably, after a few days or so, the neighbours started to complain. It was so typically Genesis. The idea that we didn't want to work in a rehearsal room, we wanted to work somewhere that's friendly and had windows, contrary to rock'n'roll thinking. It adds to the quirkiness of it, I think that's

PHOTO BY MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Album cover by Betty Swanwick. Peter Gabriel asked her to add the lawnmower to her painting, The Dream.

AL MURRAY on *Selling England By The Pound*

The comedian and Progressive Music Awards host on the album's significance...

"This album is the band's sweet spot – Genesis' soaring creative ambition matched by their immaculate playing. Gabriel's finessed word games and more than anything else the big, big tunes that lie at its heart. The strange enduring topicality of *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight* suggests there's more to prog than English whimsy – it's an unrepeatable lament for past, present and future."

See www.thepublandlord.com.

why that album has a smile." This smile was reinforced further by the group's move to one of their usual – and, again, improbable – haunts, the Una Billings School Of Dance in London's Shepherd's Bush to continue rehearsing. Phil Collins' mother, who ran the Barbara Speke Stage School in Acton, knew Billings, which is how the band ended up there.

"Una Billings was weird enough in itself," Hackett says. "You'd be downstairs with the gob-stopper machine and the girls dancing upstairs doing their first ballet steps, all going clippetty clump, clippetty clump, you'd have this rhythm going on. It's completely mad," Hackett laughs. Collins wrote in his autobiography, *Not Dead Yet*: "Where previously we could smell freshly cut grass, we're now high on the odour of ballet pumps." Even though the group were gaining traction, they were in debt, and struggling. "When you're a young band, much of living is at subsistence level," says Hackett. "We hope our contract is going to be renewed; we hope there'll be gigs, we hope people will like it. It was a very slow process." However, they now had the seeds of material that would become some of the most-loved in their career.

Selling England... was recorded in three weeks in August at Basing Street Studios in West London. The band asked John Burns to produce, who had worked as engineer on *Foxtrot*. Burns was of a similar age to them, and had already had considerable experience.

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Genesis promo pounds. Sadly not legal tender.

WARING ABBOTT/GETTY IMAGES

Genesis preparing to join Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City on their Selling England... tour, 1973.

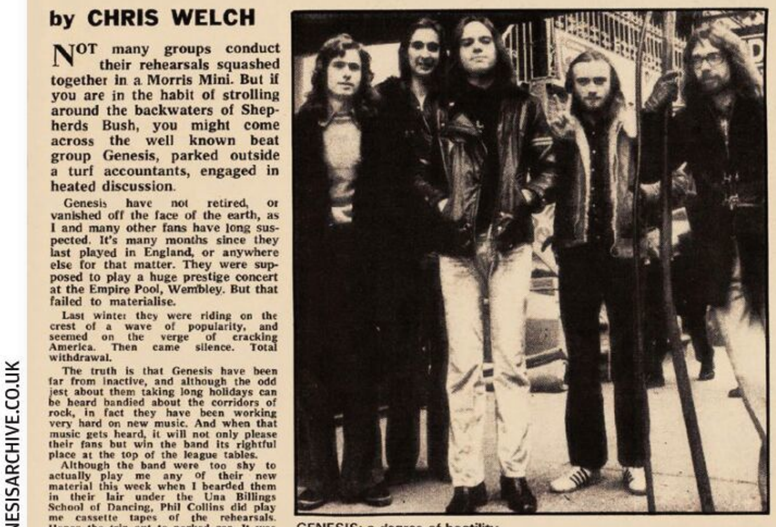
"John was great for a young band," Hackett continues. "He was very hands-on. His reassurance was key. He was also a guitarist and understood how guitars were supposed to sound. When I was doing *Foxtrot* I was using a small amp; this time I was using the full rig and giving it some welly. He was very good at capturing that – it's a very thick sound."

Although ostensibly an eight-track album, it hinges on five significant pieces, and none more so than its opener. *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight* was originally called *Disney*, and Peter Gabriel wrote the opening section's melody, while the rest of the band contributed to its later sections. But the subject matter was the most overt in reflecting this commercialisation of a troubled Britain, with Gabriel singing a folk madrigal as Britannia, posing the simple but effective question at the album's very outset: *'Can you tell me where my country lies?'* Father Thames has drowned, but the population is too preoccupied to notice, as they digest their Wimpy burgers, spending pounds to gain pounds. The Arthurian legend is invoked, and the final cry of calling the *'Knights of the Green Shield'* to *'stamp and shout'* is a pun on the long defunct Green Shield stamp-and-spend reward system. This call for an uprising to reassert Britain's place in the world delivered forlornly by Britannia is one of Gabriel's most poignant (and pun-filled) lyrics.

Musically, it begins gently before heading off into battle, showcasing the road-rested confidence of the players. "It went from Scottish plainsong to something Elgarian, to something futuristic, touching on fusion and other forms that still haven't been named," Hackett affirms. "We weren't calling it progressive at the time... we were experimenting and letting it all hang out."

Another reason for the album's enduring allure is that *Selling England...* had a snappy number that could act as an accessible calling card to the album's knottier core: *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*. Genesis always knew a good pop tune when they heard it. And *I Know What I Like...* is a *fantastic* pop song. Still unsure that he could compete with the Charterhouse core of the band, Steve Hackett decided to bring in riffs for the album rather than whole songs, as was Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks' way. "I thought that was the best way to go. I used to play it through a Leslie cabinet and Phil would join in. It was a *Foxtrot* reject, but a linchpin for *Selling England....*" Soon the other members joined in. Gabriel came up with a melody line and a lyric inspired by what was to become the album's cover painting, The Dream, by Betty Swanwick.

With its words wittily referencing the Garden Wall, Banks and Gabriel's Charterhouse band, *I Know What I Like...* is the tale of external pressure on Jacob, a young man (allegedly Genesis' roadie Jacob Finster) to conform. With Banks' irresistible chorus, Rutherford's electric sitar and Gabriel's to-die-for synthesiser riff to close, it all scuttles along with tremendous panache and humour; in fact, it makes a case for the miniscule sub-genre, glam-prog. Praised by *Sounds* for conjuring up "amazing visual possibilities with its childlike quality of far away images", it was taken from the album as a single, it reached the UK Top 40 in 1974. For many outside the cognoscenti, this was their first invitation to visit the idiosyncratic cottage industry of Genesis.



GENESIS: a degree of hostility

What Genesis did on their 'holidays'

by CHRIS WELCH

NOT many groups conduct their rehearsals squashed together in a Morris Mini. But if you are in the habit of strolling around the backwaters of Shepherds Bush, you might come across the well known beat group Genesis, parked outside a turf accountants, engaged in heated discussion.

Genesis have not retired, or vanished off the face of the earth, as I and many other fans have long suspected. It's many months since they last played in England, or anywhere else for that matter. They were supposed to play a huge prestige concert at the Empire Pool, Wembley. But that failed to materialise.

Last winter they were riding on the crest of a wave of popularity, and seemed on the verge of cracking America. Then came silence. Total withdrawal.

The truth is that Genesis have been far from inactive, and although the odd jest about them taking long holidays can be heard bandied about the corridors of rock, in fact they have been working very hard on new music. And when that music gets heard, it will not only please their fans but win the band its rightful place at the top of the league tables.

Although the band were too shy to actually play me any of their new material this week when I bearded them in their lair under the Una Billings School of Dancing, Phil Collins did play me cassette tapes of the rehearsals. Hence the trip out to parked car. It was the only place where a cassette player was available.

I explained it was believed the band had retired. This was greeted with laughter. Said Tony: "The point is, we just didn't have enough time to write new material. The results of the rehearsals have been great. The only problem is we won't have enough time to play it in on the road before we start recording in about a couple of weeks time.

"When we start touring again a few of the old numbers will be dropped, but we'd like to combine old and new material. When we started rehearsing we worked too slowly because there seemed plenty of time, but then we found ourselves pushed for time."

What new music had emerged from the Genesis workshop? Said Peter: "One of the pieces may be 'The Battle Of Epping Forest.' There is a story behind that.

"About two or three years ago I read a newspaper item about a gang battle that took place in Epping Forest. I like to collect cuttings from newspapers about any odd happenings. In this case I kept the cutting for ages, but could not find out anymore about the battle.

"I even put an ad in The Times and checked in newspaper libraries. But the story had disappeared off the face of the earth. Even my original cutting seems to have disappeared."

All the band agreed that their first proper American tour that followed debut appearances in December, had achieved a good measure of success.

"We played some good gigs," said Peter, "including a couple with Lou Reed where we were greeted with some degree of hostility.

"It was good for us, because we had to work harder. It was like starting all over again. We seemed to provoke a very violent reaction. Either they really hated us or liked us."

Tony Banks recalled that Genesis went through much the same treatment in England in their early days and Mike Rutherford thought: "It's most upsetting when a loud voice ruins the music." But said Peter: "If you play well after that, then you play really well. You've got to channel their aggression."

"But you can feel, not so much embarrassed, just very silly when you get some guy yelling at you," said Phil. "I think it's good mind, because it's more of an achievement when they get to like our music. We did one gig in Chicago that was awful. They really just didn't want to know. But other places like Cleveland were good. We want to go back to America and I think we'll be going in November."

In the meantime, did they think their sudden disappearance from the scene in England had done them any harm?

Said Peter: "Well you would probably know more about that than us. In some ways our career has been one of slow development. We tend to look on this period of rehearsal as our most creative stage.

"There is very little danger of us being over exposed now, but if we had worked incessantly, it would have done harm to us. They always refer to this period as our annual holiday but there is more strain on me physically during rehearsals than there is in being on the road."

Did Peter feel confident that the long rehearsal had worked?

"When we don't feel confident in what we'e doing, that's when we'll stop."

To tide over the gap in appearances Genesis have a new Charisma album released "Genesis Live," and the group seemed well pleased with the results. Said Steve: "It hasn't got any original material on it, but it's a kind of collectors piece."

"We tried to avoid too much audience noise," said Peter. "You can spend far too much time listening to clapping. There is a Marcel Marceau album which is absolutely silent, with clapping at the end."

Phil: "But who buys it?"

Genesis will probably be back on the road by October, and they are bound to keep old favourites like "Suppers Ready." They want to enlarge the repertoire enough to be able to chop and change their act, which is at present rather rigid. The last chance to hear all the old material will be at Reading Festical.

First hearing of the new music came when we adjourned to Phil's Mini. "I'll hum the tunes," said Peter from the back seat, as the opening bars of "The Battle Of Epping Forest," filled the motor with clear sound.

The tracks had no vocals on them and Peter sang along, rocking the car from side to side. The "Battle" has a catchy march theme with typical Genesis drum and bass lines, clean and precise.

Most of the other stuff was untitled and there was one piece that ended in a shambles, but basically it was fine music, fierce, impassioned and demonstrative.

There is method in Genesis madness, and the band who once took picnic hampers to gigs before someone told them about motoway caffs, will soon be unveiling their terrible sanity before and awed and receptive world.

WWW.THEGENESISARCHIVE.CO.UK

Interview with Chris Welch in *Melody Maker*'s July 28, 1973 issue. He listened to the new Genesis album on the cassette player of a Morris Minor that was parked outside the Una Billing's School Of Dance. High tech!

After the levity comes the gravity. One of Banks' greatest and loftiest creations, *Firth Of Fifth* was stitched together from three separate pieces of music left over from *Foxtrot*, becoming one of the group's most-loved songs. After Banks' grand piano introduction, the power of the band's arrival still surprises. It features Hackett's single best guitar solo with the group. Although we return to the world of fantasy, the suggestions of the sands of time being eroded by the river of constant change echoes the uncertainty of *...Moonlit Knight*.

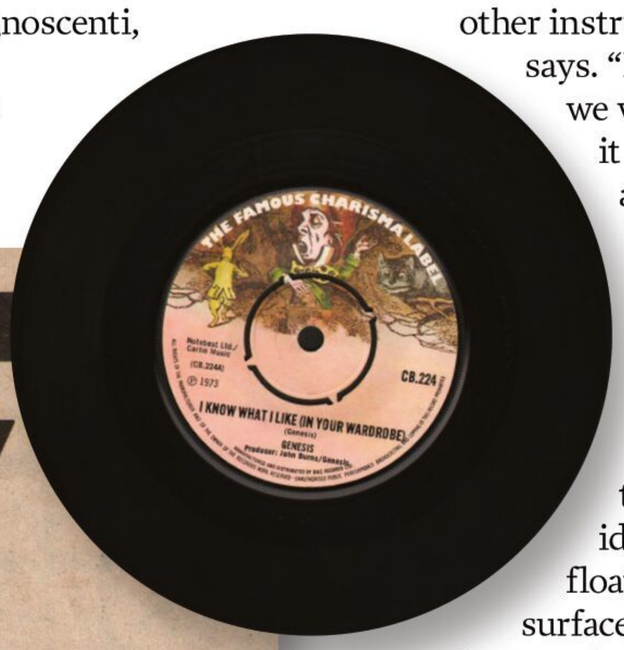
"There was a melody which had originated on piano, and seemed to only gain when it was played with other instruments," Hackett says. "I remember when we were at Una Billings it sounding like a record. I was able to improvise and come back to it – it just seemed to play itself. Because the song was about the river and the sea, I had this idea of a seagull floating above the surface, gliding, holding the note, letting it become the melody, wait for it, the tension and the release of something that looks like a flight, ducking and weaving."

Another reason for *Selling...*'s appeal is that when Genesis finally hit the big time in the 80s, it was the album that newer fans could visit that sounded most like the group they knew, none more so than on *More Fool Me*, a curio that pointed towards the future, with Phil Collins taking his second lead vocal for Genesis. The two-minute love song closed the first side, and was put on at the suggestion of producer Burns, who thought it provided contrast to the high drama elsewhere.

The most problematic track on the album follows, but in a way it gives it its greatest charm, as it sits alone and frequently unloved in the group's catalogue. *The Battle Of Epping Forest* was simply one long showcase for Gabriel's voice and characterisation, a sort of modern Gilbert And Sullivan operetta. And as for subject matter, gangland warfare on the fringes of North East London was another resolute departure from the group's usual pastoral meanderings. This rich and vivid story – allegedly rooted in truth – seemed meat and drink to Gabriel, who constructed another musical comedy in the style of *Get 'Em Out By Friday*. Deceptively long at 11 minutes, it is akin to a Monty Python sketch set to music, complete with myriad voices, generous double-entendres, camp academic stereotypes (*'Harold Demure, from Art Literature'*, indeed) and little room for the instrumentation to breathe.

Tony Banks, for one, was never a fan. He told Armando Gallo in the late

> "In the early days there was a lot of comedy. Which may have been why John Lennon said that he liked us, the fact that we seemed so prepared to make complete arseholes of ourselves!" **– Steve Hackett**



The ...*Wardrobe* single and plea to hardcore Genesis fans to stop moaning about "selling out" and buy it, from *Disc*, February 1974.

8 Disc—February 9, 1974

Disc the single-minded music paper

We know what we like - Genesis

GENESIS "I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)" (Charisma CB 224). Well, what do you know? A single from Genesis, and a fine piece of music it is too. But then they specialise in that . . . This is not truly a single — but an album track that's been made into one — though it's still strong and compulsive listening. I'd love to see it in the charts, and if their hard core fans can stop mumbling about "Selling out" and just buy the record, we may find it up there before too long.

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70s, "Although the vocals are very nice, they completely ruin the song because there's too much happening – a complete battle between the vocals and the music all the way through."

It also deals obliquely again with the search for a lost England, corrupt reverends, antique shops, judgments based on what a person owns as opposed to who they are, and increasing commercialisation, and a dig at the death of the hippie dream, with a new 'pin-up guru' every week, turning alternative lifestyles into simply another commodity, 'Love, Peace & Truth Incorporated.' It became a staple of the Genesis live set for the end of 1973 and into 1974, giving Gabriel the opportunity to don stocking masks and act out some violence. "*Epping Forest* died a death in America," Hackett adds, ruefully. "Mainly because they'd never heard of Epping Forest or vicars talking like that; it's very British, isn't it? An elaborate joke but it's got its moments, too. I think there's aspects of the *Carry On* series, perhaps – it's full of Sid James meeting Kenneth Connor; it's Ealing as much as prog rock."

After *The Ordeal* acts as light relief. It is amazing that such a pretty four-minute instrumental was to prove one of *the* hot potatoes of the album. When the album was being sequenced and edited, Banks and Rutherford did not want it. Hackett did. "I had to threaten to get *After The Ordeal* on the album, as was so often the case in Genesis," he explains. In fact, to the point where he was going to leave if his idea wasn't accepted.

"If they weren't going to include all of my ideas on it, if it was going to be expurgated, I was off. I don't think anyone was expecting me to be quite so forthright at that point. I nailed my colours to the mast."

The 11-minute long *The Cinema Show* was originally intended to run as a side-long piece flowing in from *...Moonlit Knight*. "If we had done that, it would have been another *Supper's Ready* and it might not have survived as well." Hackett says. "Phil was adamant, and that was what put the kibosh on it."

After a series of sweet verses from Gabriel, with lyrics largely written by Banks and Rutherford, at six minutes, the track abruptly shifts gear from its dreamy acoustic mid-tempo as the band move into a slow-building and soon-to-be free-wheeling jazz rock instrumental leading to a climatic close; recorded with just Banks, Collins and Rutherford, it was later to provide the encouragement needed for the group to continue as a trio after Hackett left the group in 1977.

Below: *Disc* finds tomorrow's stars in November 1973. Below right: *NME* loves the new album. As well they should, frankly.

6 Disc—November 10, 1973

DISC FINDS TOMORROW'S STARS TODA

GENESIS' Peter Gabriel . . . weird and wonderful fantasies

Selling records by the pound

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"HE'S NOT the easiest of

For a start circumstances demanded that the interview take place in the back of a car instead of in the flat. Then guitarist Mike Rutherford had just run someone over in his car, two cats were going berserk rushing round the living room after each other in a fit of what could have been either plague or libido and Pete's telephone would connect him only with an engineer marooned at the top of a telegraph pole at the end of the road.

A calming cuppa seemed the only answer, so we consumed a heady brew of lapsang souchong subtley blended with a couple of Tetley bags before piling into the car to set course for Shepperton Studios.

It transpired that Genesis were making an hour-long film of them.

nameless stars are lopping positively decades off their ages it seems strange that a 23-year-old should want to look 30. What was the reason behind this mutilation of the Gabriel tresses?

"There isn't one. It's just a cheap gimmick to make me rich and famous." And it works. The band's latest album "Selling England By The Pound" was way up in the LP chart almost before it was released and their recent British tour was a near sell-out.

New Genesis are off to crack America. They've only had two visits there in the past—one for a long gig, the other a tour. Although apologetically Peter says: "If we only worked in this country, we wouldn't be able to afford to put on the show we do."

The show, in case you haven't

make a lot more ening the set and in one evening, seem right."

The theatrics geared to the plains. "The us and other b theatrics is th corded a song to present it just put on no particular music."

Undoubted the act has b of new, your "And I'm too," says don't unde more comp music but that energy

September 29, 1973

NEW MUSICAL

Albums

The Pound recovers

GENESIS: — "Selling England By the Pound" (Charisma)

GENESIS FANS unite, stand proud and be counted; get ready to say 'I told you so' to all those people who have been doubting your praise of the band.

"Selling England By the Pound" is the band's best, most adventurous album to date.

There comes a time in every band's career when everything comes together, all the ideas, the playing, everything the group has been trying to put across. And that's the case with this album.

There's not a half finished idea here, every track is worked out down to the last drum roll. There's so much subtlety that numerous listenings continue to reveal new found secrets.

"Dance With the Moonlight Night" begins the album as Peter Gabriel sings a folky lament acapella. A bit medieval, the piece features layed back guitar wandering and majestic melody lines.

Even on the first track, a difference is apparent. For starters, Tony Banks is playing more piano than organ; this is coupled with Gabriel's emotive

Peter Gabriel of Genesis

nute and soft and gentle the next.

"I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)" conjures up amazing visual possibilities with it's childlike quality of far away images. A flute comes in at the end, reminding one ever so slightly of early Traffic.

Classical themes are carefully mixed with rock, highlighted by Banks' grand master piano playing and Collins' orchestral percussion on tracks like "The Firth of Fifth" and "After the Ordeal".

"The Battle of Epping Forest" is the one that will no doubt be a grand stage production. One can easily envisage

with each song, always blending in with the creative use of moogs, mellotrons and synthesizers.

Banks makes those instruments come alive. He never reverts to easy mechanical gimmickry like so many of his contemporaries.

So forget all those supergroups, all the super hype and all those mundane 'concept' albums. Disregard those mellotron based wonders that are almost always boring. Forget all those bands that sound the same. Genesis stand head and shoulders above all those so-called progressive groups.

Even the people upstairs like this one!

The theme of the state of the UK comes into focus again with *Aisle Of Plenty*, a short reprise of the original melody of *...Moonlit Knight*. The short verse offers a series of puns about contemporaneous UK supermarkets and concludes with Gabriel watching *'the deadly nightshade grow'*. Was England going to be left under a carpet of the alluring yet poisonous plant while everyone is busy buying stuff? He and Collins call out a series of prices of consumer goods on offer. This minute and a half drifts by and links the album back to where it began, the cash-strapped UK economy of '73. This lyrical realism demonstrated that Genesis were aware of the state of the nation and their surroundings.

Selling England By The Pound was released in October 1973. Strikingly complex yet often deceptively simple, it heralded a different Genesis. The artefact itself looked different. It moved away from the band's now-trademark gatefold sleeve and Paul Whitehead illustrations. Its single sleeve with lyric sheet offered something more direct. Gabriel had persuaded Betty Swanwick to add a lawnmower to her painting, The Dream, which had inspired *I Know What I Like...* and for it to be used as the cover. It managed to pull off the perilous feat of retaining the English whimsy of the previous releases, while looking more in keeping with a modern jazz album.

It was also well-received. Barbara Charone wrote in *NME*: "Genesis stand head and shoulders above all those so-called progressive groups." Genesis were progressive as they were reflecting on the state of the nation, be it the bully-boy gang warfare on the fringes of London, or the threat to national identity. Gabriel's escapist vision, married with the increasingly impressive musicianship of the group was providing a suitable antidote to the increasingly grim economic landscape in the UK. By the end of 1973, *Selling England By The Pound* was Top 10 in an album chart populated by Slade, David Cassidy, Status Quo and Peters and Lee.

The concerts that supported *Selling England By The Pound* saw Gabriel's costumes and props getting ever more otherworldly and elaborate. There was now even a lawnmower brought on stage to assist in the narrative of *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*. The band themselves seemed to become ever more invisible; often looking like they were conducting an intense seated scientific experiment: "We were like the pit orchestra, Pete was the show," Hackett recalls. "I used

RICHARD MACPHAIL on *Selling England By The Pound*

Friend of the band and biographer on the album's significance...

"Many of the fans who love Peter's era cite it as the best album of all. It certainly is *one* of the best. It stands on the shoulders of *Nursery Cryme* and *Foxtrot*; by the time they came to write and record *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, things were falling apart, and although it has many moments of staggering brilliance, I have always felt that it was flawed. For me, the two stand-out tracks are *Firth of Fifth* and *The Cinema Show*. *Selling England* is an album that truly stands the test of time and has moments that still send shivers up my spine."

Richard Macphail's My Book Of Genesis is available at www.mybookofgenesis.com.

Peter Gabriel as Britannia in 1974.

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

to look up from time to time with a big smile on my face."

The Selling England By The Pound UK tour saw the band comfortably filling 2,000-seater venues. Another reason for the enduring allure of the album is its accompanying promotional film, live at Shepperton Studios. The group's foothold in America was getting stronger, too. After their short tour in December 1972, Genesis had returned in March 1973 before beginning a major North American tour in November of that year. Genesis were treated with bemusement by sections of the rock audience, but the press sensed there was something afoot. They seemed to be offering a vision of exactly what British people should be: deeply eccentric, quirky. They were, if you will, selling this exaggerated version of England back to the US by the dollar.

From December 17, 1973, Genesis played six shows across three nights at the Roxy Club on Los Angeles' Sunset Boulevard. It went well: "It was one of the best welcomes we have ever had," Gabriel said. "It was our first time on the West Coast and we found we had a sort of underground mystique."

"I remember Phil saying to me very early on: to enjoy the work you do when you are playing live was really so very important," Hackett says. "People aren't going to worry about the odd gaff – what they want to know is that you're in the moment, you're doing it, you're being authentic. At the time we were doing *Selling England* we were playing the best of the two previous albums as well, I thought I was playing guitar in the best band in the world." This was paying off – they were voted 'Top Stage Band' by readers of *NME*'s annual poll, placing them ahead of all the other bands they struggled for billing with several years previously, ahead of scene leaders such as The Who and Yes.

The band toured the US again in May 1974. The tour had been enlivened by the news that John Lennon 'loved' *Selling England...*; Hackett recalled Gabriel dancing around the dressing room in response to the ex-Beatle's comments on New York radio station WNEW. "In the early days there was a lot of comedy," Hackett concludes. "Which may have been why Lennon said that he liked us, the fact that we seemed so prepared to make complete arseholes of ourselves!"

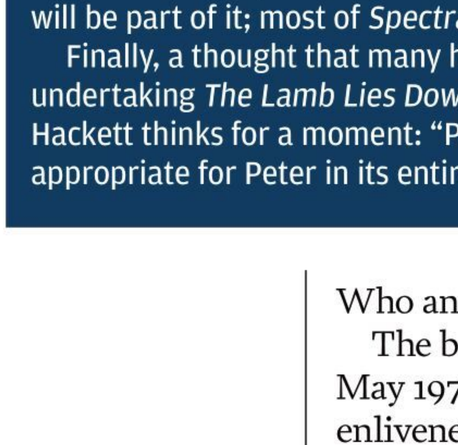
Selling England endures because it is the greatest and most commercial distillation of the '70-'75 group. In a way, it is the direct predecessor to *A Trick Of The Tail*, with the following *The Lamb Lies Down On A Broadway* as a unique, insular, glorious curveball. *Selling England...* was key in so many ways: it gave them a taste of a hit single; demonstrated that Collins could handle lead vocals with élan and the seeds of both Hackett and Gabriel's departure lay within (on their own they could make records full of *Epping Forests* and *After The Ordeals*). Most importantly, with their trio playing at the end of *The Cinema Show*, that Banks, Rutherford and Collins could play well with each other.

"*Selling England* is the album I'm proudest of in Genesis both as a player and for its unique quirkiness," Steve Hackett concludes. "I think it was very heartfelt."

"It's the album I'm proudest of in Genesis both as a player and for its unique quirkiness."
– Steve Hackett

SPECTRAL LIVE

In 2018, Steve Hackett revisited his classic 1979 album *Spectral Mornings*



Steve Hackett enjoys the thrill of visiting different eras of his catalogue for his now-annual tours. This time, as well as playing *Selling England...* he's looking at 1979's *Spectral Mornings*.

"*Spectral Mornings* rides high in my affections and those of fans. It was the time when I was first touring under my own name, with a great band. Something special happened. Every time you make an album you do the same thing: change the strings, plug in, play: even though all the ingredients might be the same, you don't really know whether the album's going to have legs or sprout wings. I was very lucky to work with a great team."

Are there any particular challenges ahead with *Selling England*? "It stands extension and expansion well. Deleted scenes are now included. Peter brought a tune to the band in the early days; although it was a band reject, decades later, I told Peter that I'd like to finish it. Nad [Sylvan] said that he'd really like to sing it, because Paul Carrack had sung it [*Déjà Vu*] on *Genesis Revisited* in 1996; we'll have that! So, the entire *Selling England...* will be part of it; most of *Spectral*, and some new stuff."

Finally, a thought that many have – would he contemplate undertaking *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* as a piece live? Hackett thinks for a moment: "Possibly, but I see it as more appropriate for Peter in its entirety." **DE**

The 17 months between April 1974 and August 1975 remain the most controversial in the long and illustrious career of **Genesis**. **Daryl Easlea** looks at *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, "an album that was created in a number of derelict houses," and the departure of lead singer Peter Gabriel.

On August 16, 1975, *Melody Maker* posited a front-page question. Pushing a story regarding Frank Sinatra's return to the UK down-page, it pictured Peter Gabriel in his full *Watcher Of The Skies* batwings, next to the legend: 'GABRIEL OUT OF GENESIS?". It became clear that the most mercurial of 70s frontmen was no longer working with the band he had co-founded at Charterhouse School in 1967.

All five members — Gabriel, Tony Banks, Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford and Steve Hackett — it seemed, had a great deal to lose. They had just 10 months previously released the double album *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, which was, for many, their most complete artistic vision to date. They had finished a US and European tour of the album that had offered one of the most complex multimedia stage shows of the age. After years of toil, the undying faith invested in them by

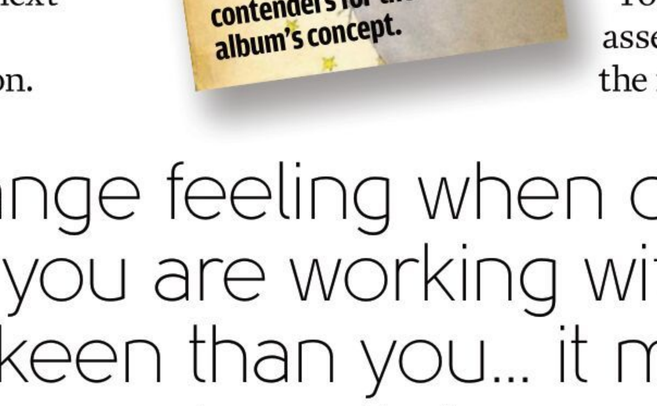
RICHARD HAINES/PHOTOGRAPHS FOREVER

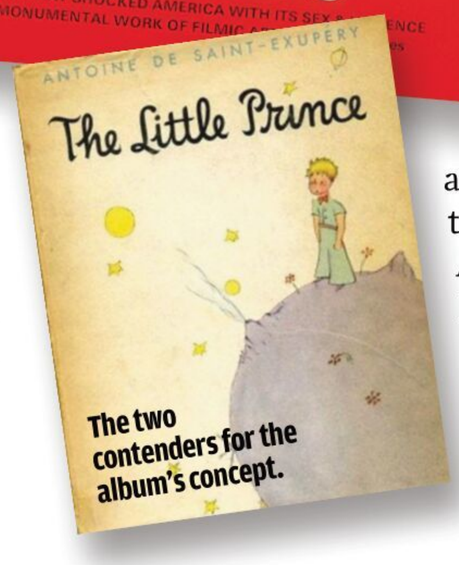
"I Was Aware There Was Something Going On With Peter"

"You talkin' to me?": Genesis relaxing at Headley Grange in 1974 .

their record label, Charisma, and with new manager Tony Smith, the band seemed on the verge of actually making some money.

But for this incarnation of the group, it was the end, and the protagonists had known since late 1974 what was going to happen. It was a testament to their long-standing relationship that they remained together, tight-lipped, working their way through their long tour. The recording, content and the performances of *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* laid bare the divisions within the group.


ALLEN KLEIN PRESENTS
A FILM BY ALEXANDRO JODOROWSKY
EL TOPO
THE FILM THAT SHOCKED AMERICA WITH ITS SEX
A MONUMENTAL WORK OF FILMIC



After the success of the *Selling England By The Pound* album and tour, Genesis began writing their next album. With a Top 30 UK single behind them (*I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*) and modest chart success in America, it was clear that their next work would garner considerable attention.

> "It's a strange feeling when one of the guys you are working with is a little less keen than you... it made it funny all round, really."
> **Mike Rutherford**

Genesis relocated to Headley Grange in Hampshire in late spring 1974 to start the writing and rehearsal process. The former poorhouse had been owned by Aleister Crowley, which had drawn devotee Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin to record there. It was in a state of some dilapidation with rats scurrying about. Although Mike Rutherford said in recent documentary *Sum Of The Parts* that Headley Grange was "a funky old place... a nice atmosphere", Steve Hackett recalls: "If anything was a haunted house, that was. You'd hear extraordinary noises at night — it was almost impossible to sleep." The album was to be sketched out with the band playing and delivering material to Gabriel who was to write his lyrics in a separate room.

The group had a surfeit of musical ideas and decided to release a double album. "I went down to the Grange where they were rehearsing," co-producer John Burns says. "I'd worked with Traffic and Jethro Tull, but I hadn't done any doubles. They were seen slightly as white elephants, like 'the white album', but then *Exile On Main Street* came out, which was, to begin with, really slated by the press, but I loved straight away."

Two ideas had been suggested for the theme of the album. Influenced by Alejandro Jodorowsky's 1970 Mexican cult movie, *El Topo*, Gabriel came up with the character of Rael, a Puerto-Rican street punk who embarks upon a form of *Pilgrim's Progress* in New York, to be known as *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. Alongside Gabriel's concept of Rael, there was another idea — principally supported by Mike Rutherford, to write an album based around *The Little Prince*, the 1943 novella by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Gabriel was vocal in sidelining Rutherford's plan: "Too twee," was his assessment of the idea.

Gabriel, however, had more on his mind: he was distracted by a request from *The Exorcist* film director William Friedkin. Friedkin had read Gabriel's essay on the sleeve of *Genesis Live* and wanted Gabriel to come up with concepts for a new film. "He was trying to put together a sci-fi film and he wanted to get a writer who'd never been involved with Hollywood before," Gabriel said in 1984. "We were working at Headley Grange... I would go bicycle to the phone box down the hill and dial Friedkin in California with pockets stuffed full of 10p pieces."

Rutherford has said it was "a strange feeling when one of the guys you are working with is a little less keen than you. It made it funny all round, really."

More importantly than the band or Friedkin, Gabriel's wife Jill was having severe difficulties at this time with her pregnancy, and problems continued after the birth of their child, Anna-Marie on July 26. There were life-changing events happening around him. "When Angie and I had a baby and Tony and Margaret had theirs

RICHARD HAINES/PHOTOGRAPHS FOREVER

Gabriel in his infamous Slipperman costume.

Above: The album cover designed by Hipgnosis with photos taken by Aubrey Powell.

> "I'm not sure if the story made much sense to most people, but it did mean something to me, in essence, it was about an awakening."
>
> **Peter Gabriel**

later, we realised it was life-changing." Mike Rutherford said in 2013. "Pete's came very early on and we were not good at change. We were very unsympathetic towards him. That was a big part of the problem really." Steve Hackett was very aware of what was happening as he was in a similar boat: "Pete was going through his version of hell, and I was going through mine. My first marriage broke up and I had a son. There was a tremendous amount of guilt; I just wanted to get on with the music, but modern life just kept crashing in all the time." With all of this happening, it was a wonder an album was made at all.

With rehearsals completed and a concept in place, the band decamped to Glaspant Farm, Newcastle Emlyn, Wales to record. John Burns was returning for his fourth album with them. "I'd been to public school and been through that crap, so on that level, I got on incredibly well with Peter and Tony," he laughs. Using the Basing Street Mobile, the recording took place in the farm's barn with Burns and engineer Dave Hutchins outside, looking at the proceedings through a small closed-circuit television in the mobile studio.

"It was basically a cowshed with a pitched roof," Burns says. "I had to send out hardboard to nail up around the drums."

"It wasn't really finished, so it just felt like camping out," Hackett adds. "It was madness really. It was an album that was created in a number of derelict houses." However, it was far from being all doom and gloom: "We had lovely weather," Burns recalls. "Phil's then-wife and my then-girlfriend were there. It was a nice atmosphere; there were mattresses on the floor — the girls would cook, and sometimes Tony would chip in."

Meanwhile Gabriel to-ed and fro-ed with both Friedkin's storyline and the weighty, portentous plot for *The Lamb*, between the hospital in London, his family and Wales. Without Gabriel's full-time presence, Banks, Rutherford, Collins and Hackett worked on the musical ideas. "Peter was pretty absent at the farm," Burns remembers. "He would come down from time to time. I was aware there was something going on with Peter, but quite honestly, I had my hands full. I'd *seen* bands break up and get back together again. I had to let it go over my head. The main thing was to get the album finished."

Gabriel's insistence that he held onto all the lyrics and the artistic flow-through of the story created further divisions. "We had written a lot of stuff," Tony Banks said in 2013. "90 per cent of the record was there, so we just carried on the idea of the album. Peter was getting difficult, and suddenly he had a different attitude. And from that moment, it wasn't as much fun."

Gabriel asked if he could take a break from the album: the group refused to let him. "Friedkin freaked when he heard he could be responsible for breaking up the band," Hackett says. "Pete came back to it."

With both Charisma boss Tony Stratton-Smith and Tony Smith working out a middle ground for the group, Gabriel ultimately did not work on Friedkin's project, which became *Sorcerer*.

"Our time was up," Hackett says. "We'd exhausted everyone's patience by turning it into a double album — schedules were going out the window left right and centre." At the start of September the band moved to Island Studios, West London to finish the recording. "We had a month off," Burns recalls. "I presume that was to sort out Peter's stuff as he hadn't much in the way of melodies or lyrics."

The recordings so far had importantly shown Banks, Collins, Hackett and Rutherford that they could create music without the involvement of Gabriel. When Gabriel came back all he did was fill everything with words. The sessions have a reputation for being fraught. "Yes, sometimes they were," Hackett says. "It wasn't easy for Pete. His ideas were really important to him for that project." And Gabriel's main idea was Rael.

Rael. One of Gabriel's most loved, debated and discussed characters.

Mug shot: Phil Collins takes a break from record *Lamb* at Headley Grange.

INSET: RICHARD HAINES/PHOTOGRAPHS FOREVER LEFT: GETTY

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Crazy times backstage after a show in Denmark in February 1975.

"Yes, of course there was a bit of me in Rael," Gabriel said in 2012. "The thing is: he was freer than me to live out things that I was never going to be able to." One of the most obvious, political statements was Rael's look, an integral part of the concept. Gabriel wore an open leather jacket and white T-shirt, with his hair cut short. It was something that prog rockers were not doing in 1974. Although his character was rooted in the supernatural and at times, the mythical, this was about as far away as he could get from the romanticised England of the previous release. Setting his tale in New York at once gave the music a link to the burgeoning underground and art scene. This was the New York that incubated punk and disco: a dangerous place synonymous with murder, drugs, prostitution and violence.

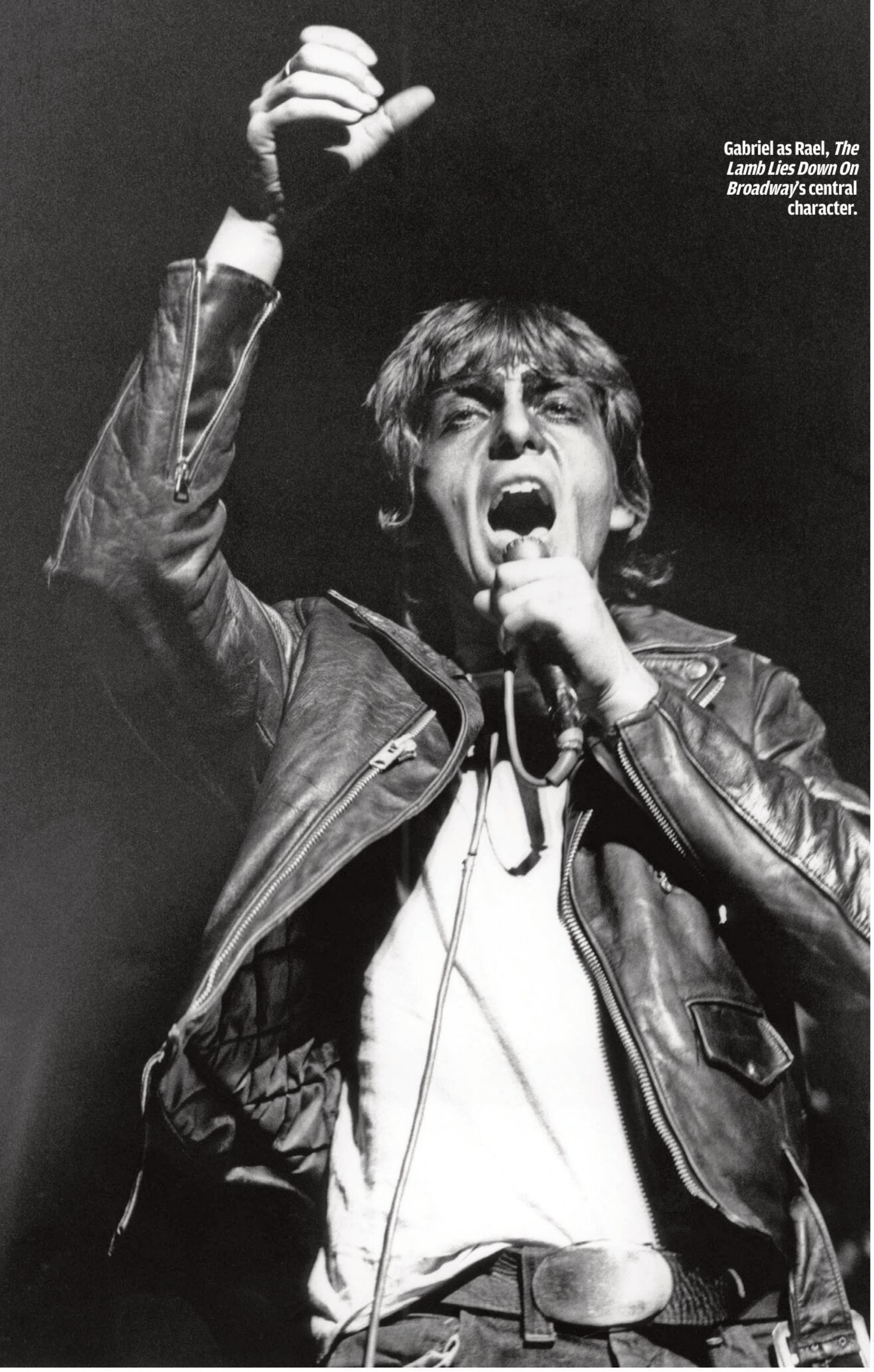
New York provided a huge inspiration for the group's music. When they first went there in 1972, they were all no older than 22, and New York then wasn't the pop-on-a-plane-shopping-weekend package it is today. As a result, the music reflects "The density of a city that is on permanent overload," Steve Hackett says. "The first time we were there, we were not able to sleep at night because of the sound of the sirens. It seemed that the city was permanently on fire."

At Island Studios, Gabriel engaged Brian Eno to assist, notably on *The Grand Parade Of Lifeless Packaging* on which he put Gabriel's vocals through his ARP synthesiser. "Eno was a breath of fresh air," Hackett recalls. "He came in full of enthusiasm – he added some radical treatments. He was intelligent and passionate about stuff." Gabriel credited Eno for 'Enossification' and Banks felt that it was too much. "His contribution to the album is minimal actually," he said in 1992. "I often wonder why we even credited him, because what he did was very little."

> "Peter was getting difficult, and suddenly he had a different attitude. And from that moment, it wasn't as much fun."
>
> **Tony Banks**

As with all of Gabriel's recordings, the lyrics came last, often at the 59th minute of the eleventh hour. "We would do a compilation of two or three vocal takes based on two or three tracks." Burns recalls. "He would sing it different every time. I'd have to drop in ts and ds. I got very good at that. Phil, Mike and I all smoked dope. Sometimes when you are stoned with someone who is not, you can mis-communicate – but there was absolutely no way that that was ever a problem with Peter, who didn't drink or smoke – he was naturally that way."

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway was finally delivered in late September 1974, ready for November release. It was unlike anything Genesis as a group had recorded before, or, as a whole, since. It looked and sounded different. Go-to 70s album designers, Hipgnosis, designed its arty, angular photographic sleeve, featuring male model Omar as Rael. Shot in black and white, it was a huge step away from the otherworldly paintings of Betty Swanwick or Paul Whitehead. With George Hardie's graphics – including a new, line-drawn logo – and his graphically stunning inner bags, the sleeve, shot in Wales and in the vaults and tunnels under London's Roundhouse offered purchasers a cornucopia of stoned interpretation.



Gabriel as Rael, *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*'s central character.

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What added further to the density of the concept was Gabriel's' impenetrable text laid out across the album's gatefold sleeve. Here were five columns of tiny words, telling the story of Rael, and his struggles in subterranean New York to locate his brother John. The reader is introduced to characters such as the Slippermen, Lillywhite Lillith, the Lamia and Doktor Dyper. "I think some of the lyrics are great," Banks said in 2013. "But I don't enjoy the story as a whole. It owes quite a bit to Kurt Vonnegut's *The Breakfast Of Champions*. It encourages the idea that the album was dark and dense, and it isn't really, it's got some quite light pieces."

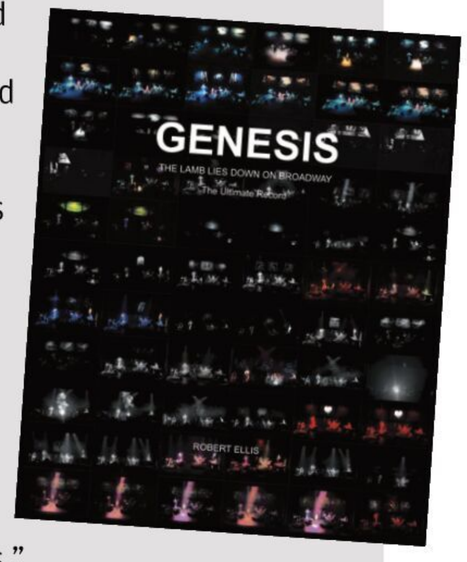
"It's like a poem everyone can read differently," Mike Rutherford added. "It lacked cohesion. It was a wonderful journey, but I feel that a conversation should be able to be explained in one long sentence or in a paragraph and you can't really with *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*."

If the artwork foxed you, wait until you heard the music. Given its problematic inception, the music on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* with its incredible, metallic soulfulness ranks among the very best the group had ever recorded, with its rousing title track — the final song that Tony Banks and Gabriel wrote together — moving to the show-stopping *Fly On A Windshield*, which, in Banks' opinion has Genesis' single greatest moment where the full weight of the band slams in. *Back In NYC* is one of the hardest things the group ever recorded with Gabriel moving frequently from a scream to a whisper. The folk-soul of *The Carpet Crawlers* serves as a five-minute distillation of the group's glory. *Riding The Scree* contains 14 seconds of the funkiest Genesis ever got on record. The album concludes with

"It hangs over us..."

Genesis and various authors ponder the enduring appeal of *The Lamb...*

Peter Gabriel firmly recollects exactly what was in his mind when he outlined the story for the album. "It was intended to be an intense story of a young rebellious Puerto Rican in New York who would face challenges with family, authority, sex, love and self-sacrifice to learn a little more about himself. I wanted to mix his dreams with his reality, in a kind of urban rebel *Pilgrim's Progress*."



He also believes that the band tackled the project in a strong frame of mind. "Musically, there was a confidence and assurance about what we were doing as writers and as players."

Mike Rutherford was surprised how well the album had held up when listening to it as Genesis prepared their 1998 box set *Genesis Archive 1967-75*.

"I was impressed with how energetic and alive it sounded. It wasn't dated, except for one or two bits. *The Lamb...* was a key album for us."

Photographer Robert Ellis, who has just published the book *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway – The Ultimate Record* (www.repfoto.com/index_book_genesis.php6), feels *The Lamb...* almost to be a work in progress.

"I think it's an unfinished masterpiece. They would have liked to spend more time on it. I especially thought the last side could have been better. You hear at some points that they were rushed. They are really proud of their album, really supportive of it, but they feel individually that it should have been better. You won't get them to admit it, but you feel it."

However, Steve Hackett is now able to step back and simply enjoy the listening experience.

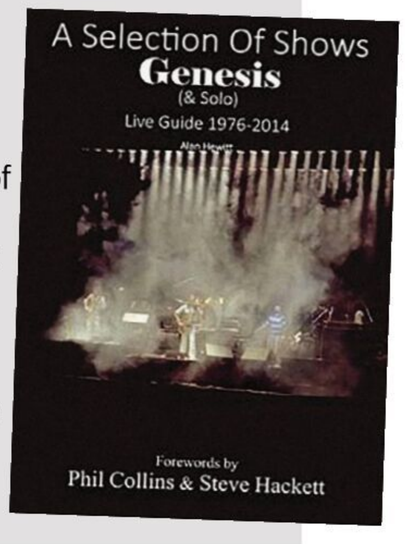
"I can just enjoy it as a piece of music. And it's fantastic. It was a clever album. Lots of great keyboard work. Not so many opportunities for the guitar to shine. But where it does, I think it's interesting."

Armando Gallo, author of *Genesis I Know What I Like* (now an interactive app/book for the iPad bit.ly/genesis-ipad-app) vividly remembers his reaction when he first heard it.

"When I played the album I immediately felt that this was the New Genesis. The band had been recording and touring for the past four years, leaving behind four great albums where their musicianship and songwriting skills has improved with each LPs. By the time *Selling England...* came out, it was clear that the band had five songwriters and now, with *The Lamb...*, these five musicians did cast the line into new rivers of creative imagination."

Alan Hewitt, author of *A Selection Of Shows Genesis & Solo Live Guide 1976-2014*, is a little ambivalent.

"I have always found the storyline to be completely obscure and deliberately so. Musically it does contain some of the band's best work, the title track and *In The Cage* for starters, but like its counterpart in Yes' catalogue, *Tales From Topographic Oceans*, there is a *lot* of padding in it too. I can appreciate just how far ahead of the game the band were in terms of stage presentation, etc. But even so, it will never sit in my top five Genesis albums."



But Rutherford still feels there might be more to come from the concept.

"It hangs over us. It's a piece that would be great to try and develop, to make it a live show on the stage." **MD**

Left and below right: taking a break at Headley Grange.

RICHARD HAINES/PHOTOGRAPHS FOREVER

The Beginning Of A Whole New World

Taking *The Lamb* on the road...

The 102 live performances of *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* became the most controversial in Genesis' touring history. From the initial postponement of its UK leg in October 1974, when Steve Hackett severed a tendon in his hand, to its final fizzle out at the Palais des Sports, Besancon, eastern France on May 27th 1975 (where Peter Gabriel played *The Last Post* on the oboe backstage). Much has been made about Gabriel's costumes, the problems with the projection of Jeffrey Shaw and Theo Botschuijver's 1500 slides, to the fact certainly in the early stages of the tour most of the audience didn't know what to expect. Add to that the fact the band was not cock-a-hoop about playing it either: "Some of the songs from *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* are rubbish to play live," Mike Rutherford said in 2013. "But you are stuck with it. It wasn't much fun to play. It was a funny tour to do."

The ambition of the performances at a time when stage technology was in its relative infancy seems naively audacious in the 21st century. The tour programme announced: "While the emphasis remains on the music and players the show will be theatrical and exciting, the music and imagery will not be separate, but whole, working together to pull the listener into the Genesis fantasy and out of everyday street realities. What Genesis are working towards is the future and their present flirtation with multimedia concepts is only the beginning of a whole new world." And of course, there are the costumes: Gabriel would appear out of a blow-up phallus as the Slipperman, and often he wouldn't be mic'd properly as he crawled around the stage; and the descending, swirling cloak of *The Lamia* would get caught around his microphone stand.

And all of that is why the memory of the tour has *such* enduring appeal. It is the tour people would love to see again: Persistent rumours abound that the whole thing was filmed (highly unlikely). When the band reformed for *Six Of The Best* in 1982, Gabriel was brought on stage in a coffin dressed as Rael to the strains of *Back In NYC*, and half of the 14-song set was from *The Lamb*. Canadian tribute act the Musical Box have performed it in its entirety with the original slides. Perhaps the Broadway musical still waits in the wings... **DE**

GETTY

it, all acoustic guitars and showboating, with Gabriel's pun on the then-current Rolling Stones' single and album, *It's Only Rock'n'Roll*.

The Lamb... was finally released on November 18 1974, just over a year after *Selling England By The Pound*.

With its sheer wealth of material and its impenetrable plotline, *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* was not, however, accepted warmly at the time. *Melody Maker* journalist Chris Welch, one of the group's most ardent supporters in the UK, led its detractors: "Genesis have given us so much, and deserve respect for their efforts. Perhaps we must be patient and wait for *The Lamb* to grow on us. But I have the feeling it is a white elephant."

If patience was what was required with the album, what on earth was needed when it was played in concert? It was conceived for live performance. The complexities thrown up by the 102-date tour that supported the album are well documented. Firstly, there will always be issues, no matter how devoted your fan-base, with playing a new album in its entirety with hardly any concessions toward older material. To compound matters, when the tour started, the album hadn't even been released, and audiences, especially US ones, who had just acclimatised themselves to the group's material were confronted with unfamiliar, complex songs and an ahead of its time slideshow. Collectively, they had heard about the man with the flower and the

old man's head and the batwings and they wanted to see some more. Instead they were confronted with a bewildering array of images, music unlike anything by the group to date and the lead singer looking like a short-haired street punk.

Three dates into the US tour, at the Swingos Hotel, on November 25, 1974, Gabriel told the band of his decision to leave them. In an orange-walled hotel room, Gabriel announced his intention at a meeting hastily convened by Tony Smith. Gabriel said in 2007: "The hotel was part of rock'n'roll culture and I realised, 'I'm part of this machinery and I don't feel this is where I should be or who I am'. I could feel the pressure mounting and I had to punch my way through it." The band initially went into denial, and thought they could persuade him to stay as Gabriel agreed to honour all touring commitments into May of the following year, but it was clear Gabriel was not for turning. Banks had lost his old friend and sparring partner. "In some ways I felt a sense of personal loss," Banks said. "But it was a relief as well, I can't deny that. We then had something to prove, which gave us a new goal. Fortunately the audience wanted to stay with us."

In April 1975, Gabriel performed his final public duty aside from the gigs as a member of Genesis. Charisma gave a reception for the group at the Savoy Hotel on London's Strand, to celebrate the gold album sales of *Selling England By The Pound* and *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. To commemorate their elevation into rock royalty and critiquing it at the same time, Gabriel wore a waistcoat made out of pound notes. There is a picture taken of the five of them and it speaks volumes — Gabriel looks relieved, delighted almost, waving a fond goodbye. The remaining four are positioned, calm and serene, as if it is their first solo press shot. The gap between Banks and Gabriel can only be a matter of inches, but it could be miles. The tour eventually ended in France a month later; quietly all five went their separate ways.

Below: THAT *Melody Maker* cover...

> "It was madness really. It was an album that was created in a number of derelict houses."
>
> **Steve Hackett**

And so, four months after they had last played together as a five piece, it was time for the story to go public. The two factions had gone on with their lives. Hackett quickly made the *Voyage Of The Acolyte*, while the other three began shaping what was to become *A Trick Of The Tail*. Gabriel was now ensconced in family life in the West Country when the news hit *Melody Maker* in August 1975. All five seemed vaguely surprised with all the attention it suddenly received.

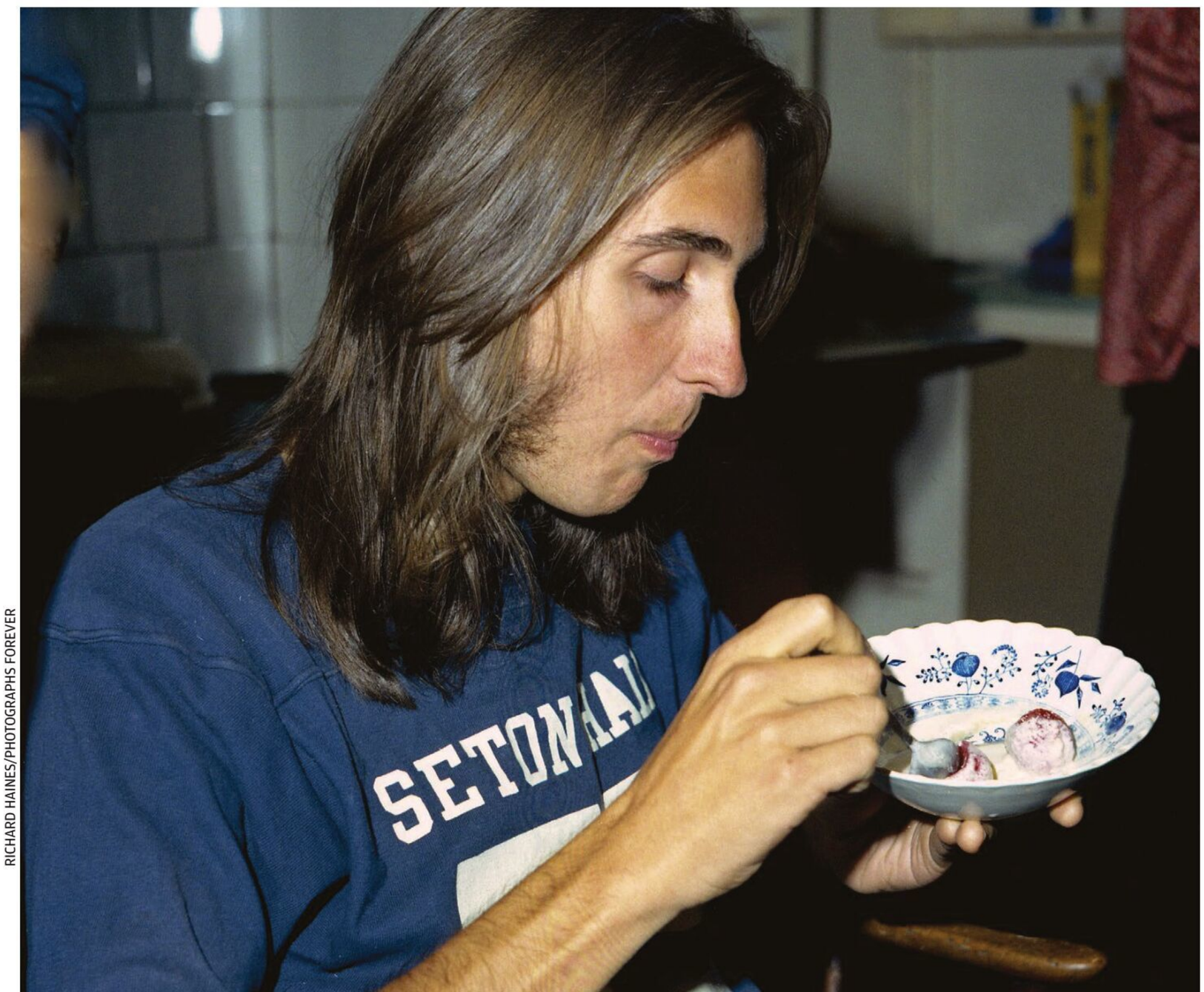
Both parties issued a press release in response. *Melody Maker* printed Gabriel's in its September 6 edition. It was a deeply personal statement that he delivered by hand to the UK music press. He talked about growing cabbages and suggested he would at some point return to music and that there was absolutely no animosity between him and his old friends. The letter concluded with a characteristically theatrical finale: "The following guesswork has little in common with the truth. Gabriel left Genesis:

1) To work in theatre.
2) To make more money as a solo artist.
3) To do a 'Bowie'.
4) To do a 'Ferry'.
5) To do a 'furry boa around my neck and hang myself with it'.
6) To go see an institution.
7) To go senile in the sticks."

In August 1975, Genesis issued a simple statement: "They are now looking for a new singer. They have a few ideas but nobody has been fixed. The group are all currently writing material and rehearsing for their new album, and they will go into the studios shortly to record. The album will be released at Christmas and Genesis will go on the road in the New Year."

Of all of Genesis' work, *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* is the one that people return to, an ultimate vindication of the group's toil. Peter Gabriel looks back at *The Lamb* with great affection; he told *Prog* in 2012: "I'm not sure if the story made much sense to most people, but it did mean something to me, in essence, it was about an awakening. He was on a journey to find himself, in a seductive, magical place." Much has been made of the varying indifference that other members have had towards the project, and many look to Tony Banks' range of reactions across the years to *The Lamb*.

"Peter and Tony got on, but they were rivals, basically," John Burns — still one of the country's key analogue producers — concludes. "Tony is definitely the influence for the Genesis sound; it was a keyboard band, really. Peter had all the live things, the dressing up. I love it as a work of art." Hackett adds, "The agenda goes back a long way with the Genesis guys, they were always competitive with each other; they still are today, even though there isn't a band." There is one fan in the camp, Phil Collins, whose playing on the album is, like Banks', never less than remarkable. He said in 2014: "*The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* was the best we'd ever been on a record." And to many, it remains that way.



RICHARD HAINES/PHOTOGRAPHS FOREVER

ANOTHER ME: PETER GABRIEL'S 'GAP YEAR' 1975-1976

Between leaving Genesis and starting to record his debut solo album, **Peter Gabriel** grew a lot: cabbages, his family, and his confidence as a musician and songwriter. This is the inside story, from Somerset allotment to American studio, of what he did on his summer holiday.

Words: Daryl Easlea **Portrait:** Evening Standard/Getty Images

When viewed retrospectively, the period between Peter Gabriel leaving Genesis and then releasing his first solo album seems like hardly any time at all. There were just 20 months between his final show with the group in France on May 22, 1975 and the release of his debut solo album in February 1977. At the time, however, it seemed an eternity.

Fuelled by his own grandiloquent statement of departure from Genesis in August 1975, which came nearly a year after he'd told the group he was going, and four months after he'd played that last show, it really did seem as if Gabriel was giving it all up and that would be the last we would see of him – at least the 'him' that people had come to know.

The length of time was amplified somewhat by the obsession the weekly UK rock press had then with generating stories and headlines – it highlighted the vestiges of the 60s mechanism of an artist releasing, at the very least, an album a year. On August 16, 1975, *Melody Maker* proclaimed, "Gabriel Out Of Genesis?" A fortnight later, the paper published Gabriel's humour-laden missive, "Why I Quit Genesis", in which he wittily assessed his future and his options.

Leaving a band so obviously on the verge of wider acceptance seemed simply unfathomable, not only to the group's fans, but to the music world as a whole. "When I left Genesis, I just wanted to be out of the music business," Gabriel told *Rolling Stone* in 2011. "I felt like I was just in the machinery. We knew what we were going to be doing in 18 months or two years ahead. I just did not enjoy that."

Gabriel's departing announcement was little short of a prescient mission statement for his immediate future, and for the rest of his career. Over 700-odd words, he looked at his life to date and his career going forward. It was unusual, too, for an artist just on the edge of hitting the big time to cite one of the reasons for packing it up as the "hidden delights of vegetable growing". This wasn't a euphemism for a prodigious drug habit, but a reference to his beloved cabbage patch at his home in Bath.

"My future within music, if it exists," Gabriel said, "will be in as many situations as possible. It's good to see a growing number of artists breaking down the pigeonholes. This is the difference between the profitable, compartmentalised battery chicken and the free range. Why did the chicken cross the road anyway?"

This idea especially encapsulated what he was to do for the following 18 months, as his chicken seemed to not just be crossing the road but veritably dancing right down the white line. It was a period that fashioned some true Gabriel oddities: a collaboration with a football-loving poet from Wolverhampton; a record with British comedic institution Charlie Drake; a Beatles cover version; and a single of brawny, long-forgotten pop, produced by Tony Visconti. It also involved cabbages, therapy, a partial Genesis reunion and visits to see Bruce Springsteen and the Sex Pistols.

"It's about being prepared to lose what you have for what you might get, or what you are for what you might be. It's about letting go."

Peter Gabriel

Back in NYC: Peter Gabriel in Central Park, 1976.

18+

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AVAXHOME-

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Peter Gabriel's retirement ended with the release of his self-titled debut album in February 1977: a record that combined muscular, straight-ahead Springsteen-esque rock with whimsy and flights of fancy. Not unlike a Genesis album, you may argue, but one made on his own terms. This was a period of exploration, of collaboration, and a most refreshing take on how to reinvent yourself.

First and foremost, Peter Gabriel needed to spend time with his young family. He had returned home at the end of the tour for *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* in May 1975 and dissolved into the community. In his statement, written at home, he said, "The increase in money and power, if I had stayed, would have anchored me to the spotlights. It was important to me to give space to my family, which I wanted to hold together, and to liberate the daddy in me."

Liberating the 'daddy in me' seemed an extremely unfashionable step at the time. Ahead of John Lennon watching the wheels with his baby Sean, at that time rock kids were often farmed out to wives and nannies, or taken on the road as an adjunct. It was well documented quite how difficult the birth of his first daughter had been for both wife Jill and baby Anna in July 1974. It was one of the principal factors in his departure from the band – as he had been the first to have children in Genesis, the group's relative lack of empathy hit him hard.

The family had relocated to Woolley Mill in Swainswick, north of Bath, which was to herald a steady trickle of musicians moving there and the birth of a scene. Jill, Gabriel and Anna were tight-knit at the old, once water-driven corn mill, with Gabriel tending his much-loved vegetable patch. It was a restful period, marking the first time Gabriel had dropped from the writing-recording-touring circle that had come to dominate his life in the preceding four years. He could do as he pleased.

The impact of this disappearance on the weekly UK rock press, needing column inches to fill, was marked. It was hardly Brian Wilson's retreat into his sandbox, but for some reason it absolutely fascinated the papers that a star, suddenly about to achieve what he had ostensibly craved, would turn his back on it at the age of 25 to pursue family life.

Gabriel at London's Empire Pool, April 1975, on his final tour with Genesis.

COVERS: MARK KENYON/THE GENESIS ARCHIVE.CO.UK
MAIN IMAGE: GETTY INSET: MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

It wasn't that Gabriel was a recluse: he would materialise in public sporadically. On June 7, 1975, he returned to his roots and appeared at a Stackridge concert at Friars, Aylesbury, where he leapt out of a birthday cake. There were no costumes, slide shows or synchronisation to worry about – just a bit of old-fashioned spectacle. Life was good, and the pressure of the music business seemed a long way away.

Long-term supporter Chris Welch interviewed Gabriel at the end of 1975 for *Melody Maker*. Gabriel had been exploring the possibilities of alternative lifestyles.

"I've also been trolling around seeing different people in various communities," he said. "One of the possibilities I've got on ice at the moment is joining a commune. It's not your drug-ridden sex orgies, but a group of people working together in a lot of areas, and one of the communes is called, by complete coincidence, Genesis... I can't get away from them. Let me out! There's another place in France I'm going to have a look at. I'm thinking of joining with my family."

Gabriel's final album with Genesis, *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*.

"Peter did various spiritual seekings," school friend Richard Macphail recalls. "He looked at the Genesis commune and quite seriously contemplated the idea of joining them. I'm pretty sure Jill wouldn't have followed him there – not that she wasn't an advocate of all this."

Gabriel also partook in the then fashionable Silva Mind Control course, a form of extrasensory perception where participants aim to reach an alpha state, a clarity of thought. "He did that with Betsy Gibson, Simon Cowe from Lindisfarne's wife," Macphail says. "She was into all that stuff as well."

Two years later, Macphail, his then partner Janessa and the Gabriels would attend EST seminars, the controversial technique designed to challenge the very fabric of one's personality.

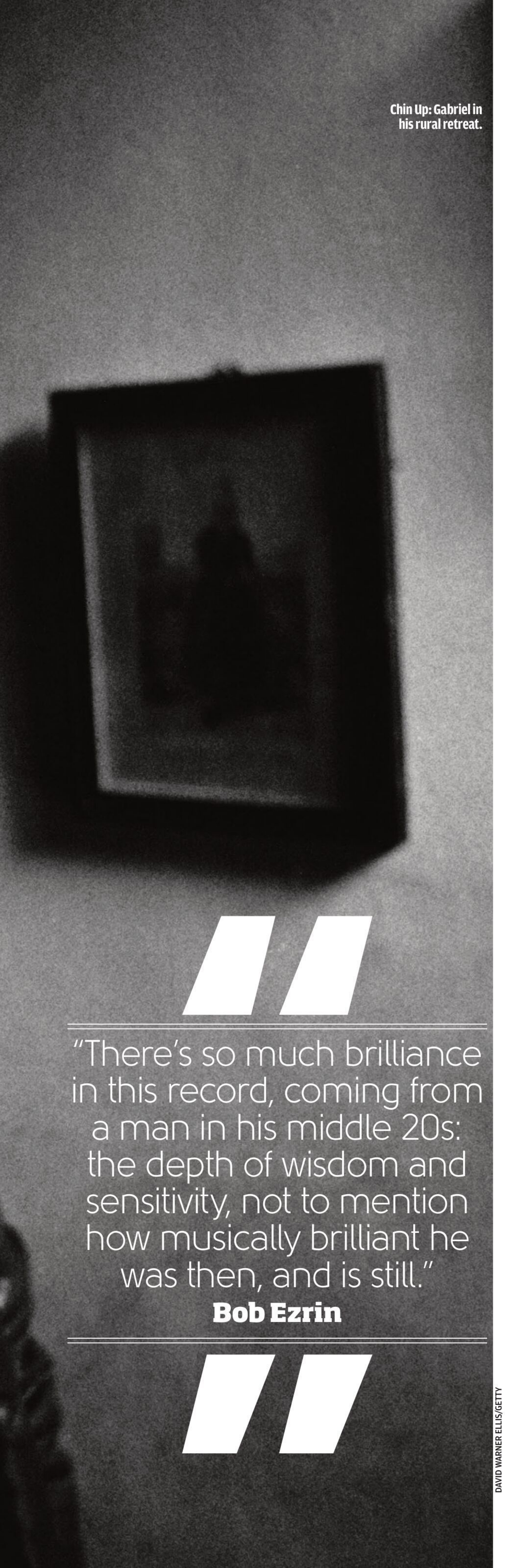
"It was all part of that theme, that process," Macphail reveals. "It leaves you open-hearted. It gave Peter and I's relationship a real grounding as we went through profound experiences together."

Gabriel's first new release of this period was his second daughter, Melanie, who was born on August 23, 1976. Although there was later to be considerable turbulence in his first marriage, there was no question how important the girls were to him and Jill.

The success of Gabriel's home life was underlined by an interview Anna gave to *The Scotsman* in 2005, when she revealed: "We went to a little village school in the middle of the country and I knew he went to work and did music," she said. "But that was all I knew really until *Sledgehammer* came out."

NME's front cover when Gabriel left Genesis (top), and his *Melody Maker* interview with Chris Welch (above).

Genesis in 1975, L-R: Steve Hackett, Mike Rutherford, Tony Banks, Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins.



Chin Up: Gabriel in his rural retreat.

"There's so much brilliance in this record, coming from a man in his middle 20s: the depth of wisdom and sensitivity, not to mention how musically brilliant he was then, and is still."

Bob Ezrin

DAVID WARNER ELLIS/GETTY

In his leaving statement, Peter Gabriel stated that there was "no animosity between myself and the band or management". (This was underlined by Gail Colson, Tony Stratton-Smith's General Manager at Charisma, who would later become Gabriel's manager: "We were quite confident that he would do something on his own," she said, "once he and his family had had some time together.")

Gabriel continued: "It is not impossible that some of them might work with me on other projects."

And this was immediately true in this first period: Gabriel was to work not only with Mike Rutherford and Phil Collins, but, going back to the early days, Anthony Phillips too.

Gabriel's first principal collaborator in his new life was someone not just outside his immediate social circle but someone on the very periphery of Genesis' world. Martin Hall was a poet and lyricist from Willenhall in Staffordshire who had been described as a 'Black Country Randy Newman'.

Hall had been introduced to Gabriel by producer John Anthony at the sessions for the Colin Scot album in 1971. Hall had been active since the late 60s, co-writing *Two's Company, Three's A Crowd*, the Brad Ford & The Sundowners single that was released on Phillips. In 1974, *Stan Cullis Blues*, Hall's book of poetry, was published by Charisma Books, complete with illustrations by Genesis artist Paul Whitehead.

Gabriel first mentioned the potential collaboration in an interview in 1973: "I do have things I'm interested in outside of the band. There is a songwriter called Martin Hall and there is a possibility of my doing an LP with him. As it is, the band comes first."

Indeed, the speculation of a collaboration was confirmed on the rear of the book, stating that Hall was "currently working on… an album with Genesis leader, Peter Gabriel".

Looking at *Stan Cullis Blues*, it's easy to see how Gabriel – fresh from battling at Epping Forest or getting them out by Friday – would have been motivated by Hall and vice versa, with the witty wordplay of poems like *Some Of My Best Words Are Friends* or the thought-provoking brevity of the eight words of *Photomatic*. *Eight Good Buys*, from Hall's 1972-'73 collection *The Songs Of The Bears Of Bilston* (the second half of the *Stan Cullis Blues* book) references deceased celebrities and death row author Caryl Chessman, providing possible inspiration for one of Gabriel's greatest lyrics, *Broadway Melody Of 1974*.

The two began writing, and three of their co-writes were to make it to vinyl. "I got to know Martin quite well," Anthony Phillips told this writer in 2013. "Martin was a big Wolves fan [Wolverhampton Wanderers FC], and a good lyricist. Looking back, you have to question why Peter was working with someone who was essentially a duplication, because Martin's strength was as a lyricist and Pete was already a brilliant lyricist."

Phillips added in 2018, "Martin was a very thoughtful guy, a really nice guy. It was a meeting of minds in the lyrical department."

"Whenever I went down to Woolley Mill Cottage where Peter was living at the time, Martin was around a lot," Richard Macphail adds. "He was quite eccentric, very likeable. He was nice to be around."

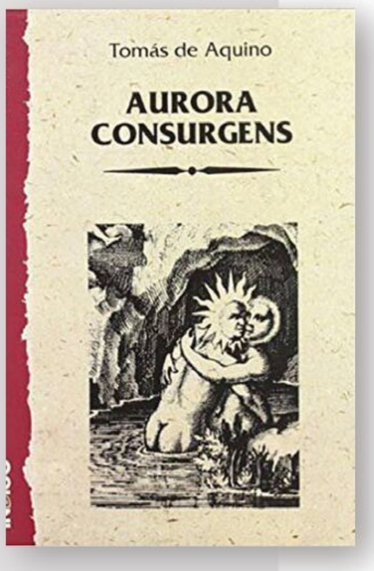
In May 1974, Gabriel recorded three demos at Anthony Phillips' parents' house in Send, near Woking, with Phil Collins, Phillips and

MOZO

Meet Mozo, Gabriel's long-lasting fictional multimedia character.

Despite all the difficulty associated with its delivery, Peter Gabriel enjoyed the extended narrative and utilisation of visuals on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, forever seen as 'his baby'. During this period, Gabriel considered the idea of *Mozo*, another multimedia concept.

Mozo was a 'mercurial stranger', an outsider based obliquely on the character of Moses. Mozo was to be a fictional character that came from nowhere, made changes to people's lives and then abruptly disappeared. His principal method of communication was through short-wave radio, something that had become an obsession for Gabriel during this period.



Mozo was inspired by the *Aurora Consurgens*, a medieval work. Carl Jung, whom Gabriel had recently become infatuated with as a writer, had attributed the work to St. Thomas Aquinas. Gabriel discussed the idea with Bob Ezrin, who in turn suggested he spoke with pioneering Czech theatre group Laterna Magica.

Gabriel would grapple with the overarching idea of Mozo right through into his *So* album in 1986. The character of Mozo is introduced by name in *On The Air*, the opening track of his second album, yet there's evidence that *Down The Dolce Vita* and *Here Comes The Flood* were also at one point intended for use in this concept. **DE**

Hall himself. "It was just before Pete started recording *The Lamb...*," Phillips recalls. "I had fairly primitive recording equipment. I don't think Pete had any; Martin certainly didn't have any. They were simple demos — they didn't get taken round anywhere."

Three Gabriel-Hall songs were committed to tape. *You Never Know* was a cheeky, upbeat track, extending out the Gabriel we knew and loved from *Willow Farm*. *Firebirds* was a beautifully emotional piano-led number, complete with Phillips quoting from Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite* at the start. *You Get What You Want (When You Rip It Off)* was the most interesting — a parody of the Stones, sarcastically eyeing the music industry, and with Gabriel sending himself up with the line, *'There's always the middle-class Rolling Stones, getting out the marrow in your backbones.'*

When Gabriel left the day job, he set about recording one of these songs. As he harboured the idea of producing and writing for other people, both yearnings converged on his first post-Genesis recordings. It's ironic, and somewhat telling, that when David Bowie got his first flush of success and could produce other artists, he chose Lou Reed and Iggy Pop. When Gabriel had the opportunity, he chose Charlie Drake.

Drake was a diminutive comedy star who had been popular in Britain for the best part of two decades. With his everyman demeanour, he had built upon his initial fame in the 50s with the TV show *The Worker* between 1965 and 1970. In common with other comedians of the day, he had enjoyed several hit singles.

In July 1975, less than two months after finally embodying *The Lamb...*'s protagonist Rael on stage, Gabriel went to Studio 2 in AIR Studios, high above London's Oxford Circus, to record *You Never Know* with Drake.

The line-up of musicians was quite incredible: Robert Fripp — who, like Gabriel, was by then in the first phase of his self-imposed exile from the music business — on guitar, jazz pianist Keith Tippett, Phil Collins, Collins' Brand X bandmate Percy Jones on bass, and legendary folk vocalist Sandy Denny. Gabriel and Hall co-produced with engineer Steve Nye, later to be an esteemed producer and a member of the Penguin Café Orchestra.

Percy Jones takes up the story: "I had got a call from Phil about an upcoming session. We did quite a few together back in those days. I got to the studio and there's Robert Fripp, Peter Gabriel and Keith Tippett, who was a neighbour of mine at the time."

Joining this line-up was Martin Hall. "With that sort of line-up I anticipated some really interesting music coming up," Jones continues. "Gabriel appeared to be the producer. Anyway, it turned out to be a very straight-ahead pop tune, not at all what I had expected. It left me a bit puzzled as to why they got a line-up like that to record that style of music. We recorded the tune, which didn't take too long from what I remember... I was told it was a backing track for Charlie Drake."

Richard Macphail arrived at the studio just as the session for the backing track was finishing. "AIR was amazing at rush hour because you could stand at the window and watch all these people way below disappearing down the holes into the Tube station. It was an extraordinary sight."

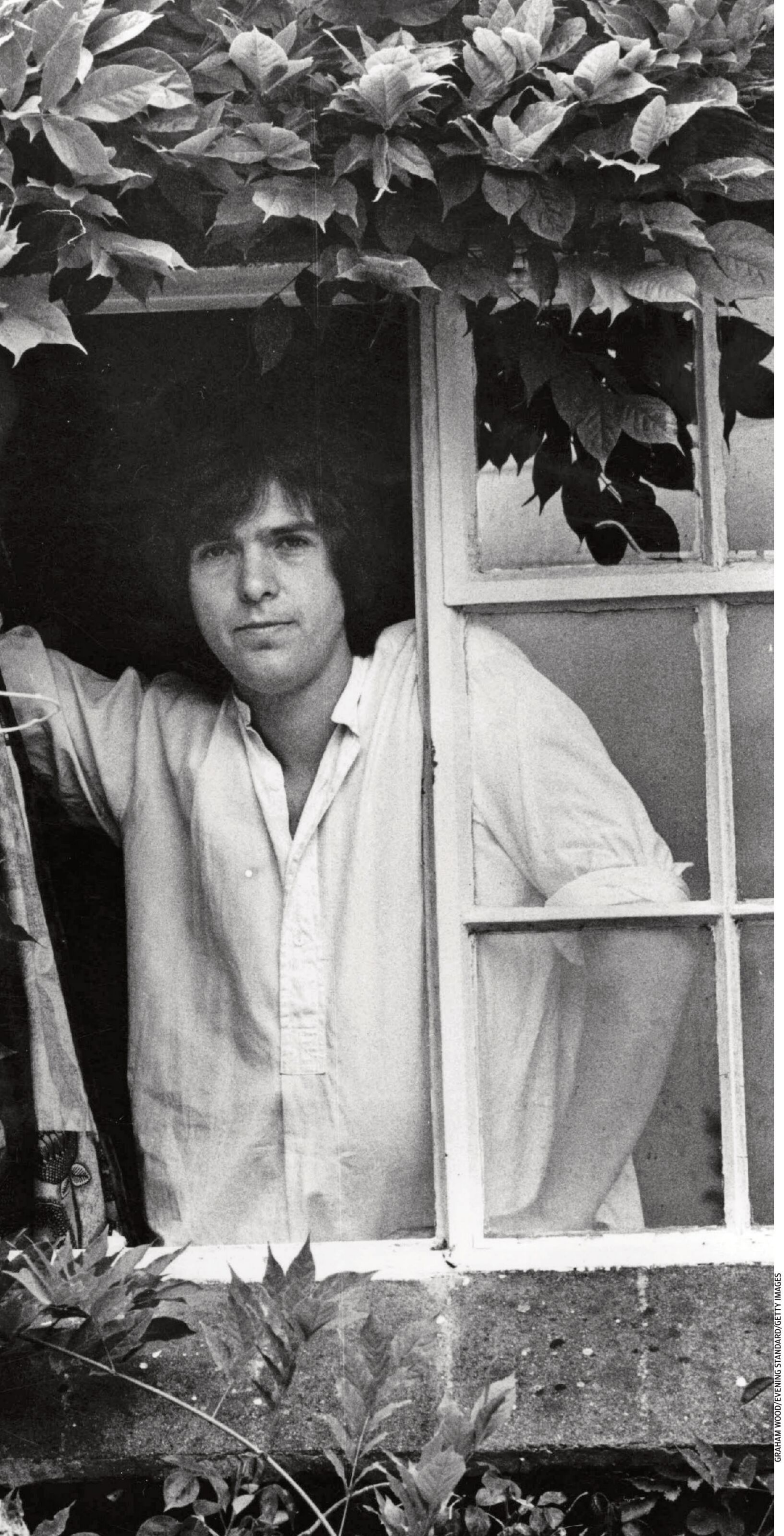
> "He was never pushy. Stubbornness was his only 'fault', and sometimes you need to be stubborn when you're standing up for a point. He was always a sweetie to work with."
>
> **Anthony Phillips**

The other extraordinary sight was seeing Drake arrive just as the musicians were leaving. "We bumped into Charlie on his way in to overdub his vocal," Jones says. "I remember him as a very friendly guy dressed in what resembled a safari suit. He said hello to us in his characteristic squeaky voice as we passed."

Macphail saw the overdub, complete with Sandy Denny's voice-over. "Charlie went in and did the vocals. It was a typical Gabriel no-holds-barred type of thing."

Phil Collins seemed as puzzled as the wider world about it. He wrote on his website after Drake's death in 2006: "How he ended up with this line-up I have no idea... The whole session was one of life's interesting snapshots."

Country House: Gabriel on his retreat from the spotlight.



GRAHAM WOOD/EVENING STANDARD/GETTY IMAGES

***You Never Know*, Gabriel's all-star single with comedian Charlie Drake.**

Fripp was later to comment: "This was arguably the strangest session of the entire era."

Jones concurs: "It was probably the most unusual session I have ever been involved in."

"I have no recollections of Martin Hall or Peter working on the Charlie Drake record or how it all come about," Gail Colson laughs. "I just remember it being delivered and then trying to work out how to sell the bloody thing! Apart from Peter and Martin, I defy anybody to remember the Charlie Drake record."

Her brother Glen, who was Charisma's Press Director at the time, goes one better: "I never heard about it and never saw any letters and Strat never mentioned it. Sounds a bit far-fetched, like shit from China, as my old man used to say!"

However, whoever wrote it, there *was* a press release that said, "The single is produced by Peter Gabriel. Erstwhile lead singer with Genesis, and sometimes human sunflower. It is a send-up of pop stardom which also features Sandy Denny, Eno [?] and Robert Fripp. As Drake is chalk to Gabriel's cheese, so is the idea of Charlie encountering a groupie – listen to the single and you'll discover what happened."

The single, credited to the production team of 'Gabriel Ear Wax' was backed with *I'm Big Enough For Me*, the theme to Drake's recent children's film series *Professor Popper's Problem*. It was released on November 21, 1975 and promptly did nothing. Drake's dreams of being a pop superstar were cruelly dashed.

"I thought he was having a bit of fun," Phillips says. "I didn't think it was going to go anywhere, but everyone was starting to flex their muscles and do different things, and I thought, 'Okay, life's been tough recently, why not have a bit of fun?' It did seem a bit strange, but then Pete was always a bit left-field."

Get The Guns, Gabriel's second Martin Hall collaboration, was covered by Alan Ross for a super-obscure Good Earth single produced by Tony Visconti in 1977. Nothing else came of the partnership with Hall, aside from *Excuse Me*, another collaboration they were demoing at this time, which was used when Gabriel finally came to record his first album proper.

"Martin wrote very good lyrics but it could never work out," Phillips says. "It was a meeting of minds with Pete, but ultimately it couldn't survive because you need to

be complementary, and they were cancelling each other out in a way."

After writing with Phillips and moving into music publishing, Martin Hall seems to have vanished. When researching, this writer almost began to wonder if Martin Hall was a pseudonym for Gabriel himself.

"I think probably a lot of people might think that!" Anthony Phillips says. "No, he very much did exist. I loved some of his poems, and some of his lyrics too. At least he'll be happy that Wolves are back in the top division!"

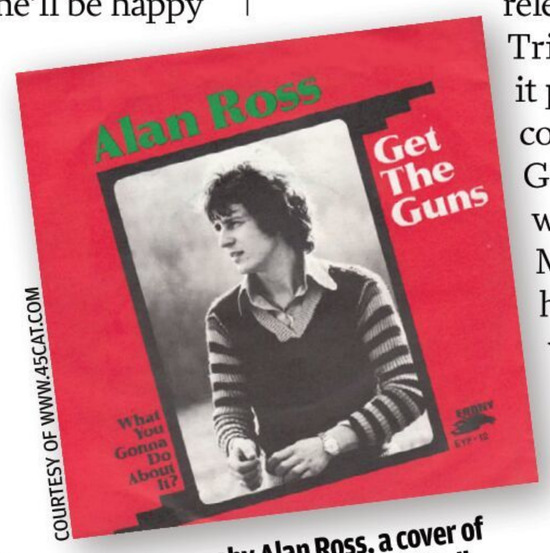
"I think it was a bit of a bridge thing for Peter because I think he felt quite lacking in self-confidence when he left the band," Richard Macphail adds. "He didn't know how it was going to go – he'd somehow found comfort and friendship in working with Martin. And then Peter got his confidence back – he wrote *Solsbury Hill* and *Here Comes The Flood*."

At the end of 1975, Gabriel recorded some demos on piano at old Charterhouse friend David Thomas' house in Putney, again with Hall. It was as if he was going straight back to school. These demos were interesting and diverse, of which *Howling At The Moon*, *Funny Man*, *No More Mickey* and *God Knows* – all Hall co-writes – have never turned up on any subsequent Gabriel recording. An early version of the game-changing new song *Here Comes The Flood* was tried out.

After their Send liaison in 1974, Gabriel again turned to Ant Phillips, who had also been using David Thomas' piano to rehearse on. "I was in London, I didn't have a piano and I used to go to David's and rehearse," Phillips says. "Pete didn't have a piano where he was so Pete taught me this stuff. It wasn't incredibly difficult in terms of needing hours to practise."

In the long, dry, drought-ridden summer of 1976, Gabriel took some ideas into Trident Studios in London's St. Anne's Court. The scene of the recording of *Trespass* and *Nursery Cryme*, it was a familiar and warm stamping ground for him. This can be seen as the start of Peter Gabriel's solo career proper.

Although nothing has ever been released from the Trident recordings, it provided another confidence boost for Gabriel, working again with Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford as his rhythm section, with another of Collins' Brand X buddies, John Goodsall, on guitar.



Get The Guns by Alan Ross, a cover of the song by Gabriel and Martin Hall.

Anthony Phillips played Trident's Bechstein piano:

"I'd studied enough to play slightly more sophisticatedly than Peter, and I wouldn't argue."

He also may have been there for talismanic reasons – as the first significant member of Genesis to leave the group, Phillips had shown that there could be life afterwards. "I was open to a lot of things, and I think Pete quite liked that. If I'd just been the composer in Genesis I'd have been a bit narrow."

It was good to be back. "It was only then that I realised quite how good a rhythm section Mike and Phil were together," Phillips says. "They were astonishing. Dear old John Goodsall completed us; he was quite eccentric. It was a funny band. Mike and Phil were very pally, but it was very professional as well. It was strange looking back that so many members of Genesis past and present were there."

Recordings included the Hall co-write *Get The Guns*, alongside an unknown track and a track still to surface – *Mr Tattoo*. Three tracks played were to appear on subsequent albums: *Slowburn*, *Here Comes The Flood* and, to be held back to 1978, *Flotsam And Jetsam*.

Peter Gabriel at his Wiltshire retreat.

Did Phillips see a completely different man in Peter Gabriel after the six years since they had last been together in Trident? "Not really, no," he says. "He was always slightly vague and a bit otherworldly, but basically always gentlemanly and patient. Maybe a little bit more confident, I guess. He was never pushy. Stubbornness was his only 'fault', and sometimes you need to be stubborn when you're standing up for a point. He was always a sweetie to work with.

"I think I was given a free-ish hand, with guidance. I was careful not to overplay, and careful not to overflower. I remember the sessions being very easy. I wasn't nervous, which you'd have thought I may have been, not having recorded in a big studio for five or six years. The last time I was there it was with John Anthony, and suddenly now these guys are not quite superstars, but pretty famous.

OF CABBAGES AND ANGELS

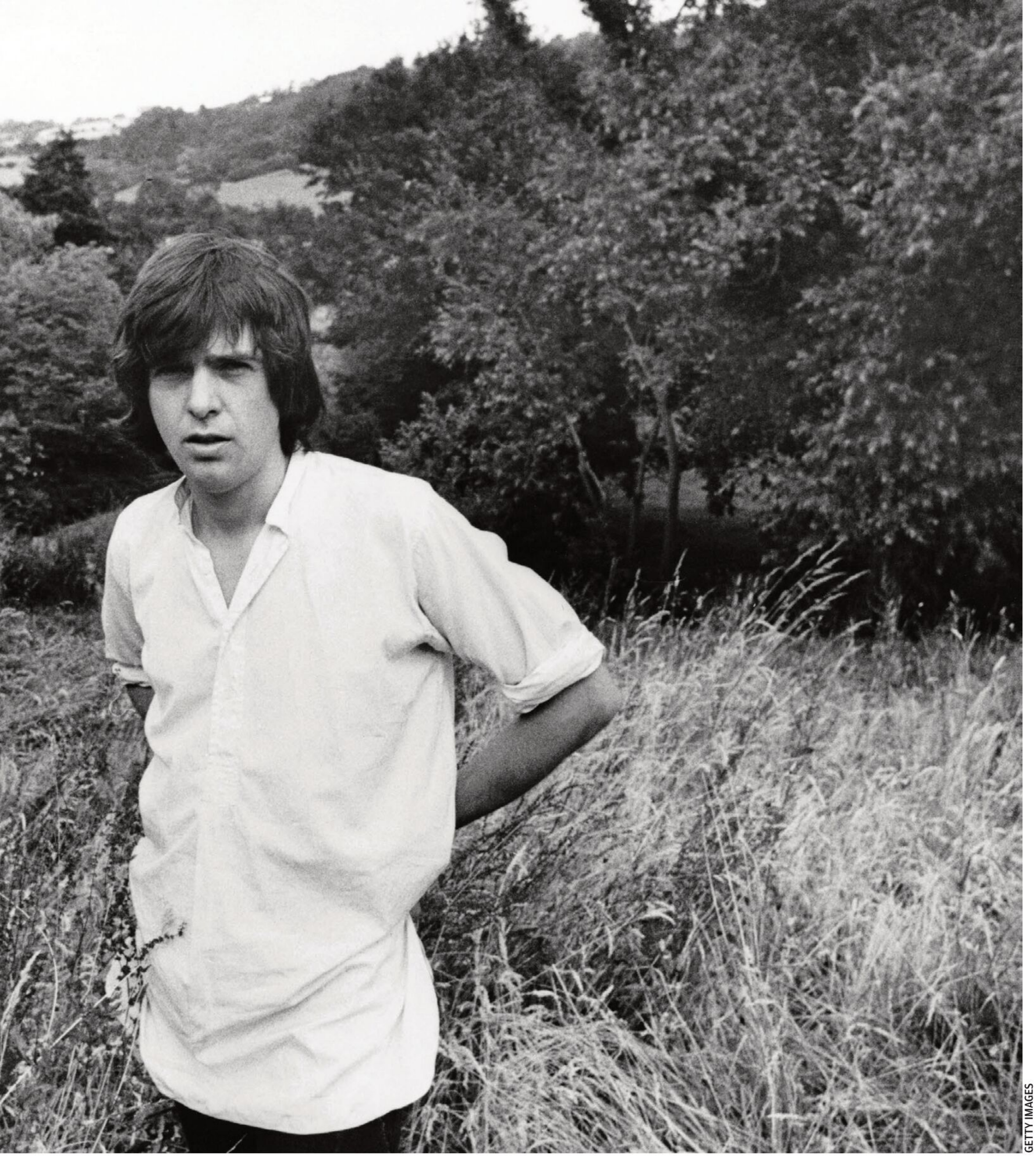
Tales from topographic allotments: Gabriel's vegetable patch revealed, by a man who witnessed it in all its glory.

One of the paragraphs in Peter Gabriel's leaving letter that gained the most attention was: "Even the hidden delights of vegetable growing and community living are beginning to reveal their secrets. I could not expect the band to tie in their schedules with my bondage to cabbages."

Gabriel remained proud of this period in his life. He was to say as late as 2012 that he took "two years off, growing cabbages and children".

Richard Macphail says: "Yes, Peter had a vegetable garden. His mother, Irene, had always had one, so it wasn't completely out of the blue. He loved growing his veg and feeding his family. He had part of the garden turned over to veg. It wasn't a big area by any means, but it's surprising, if you're good at it, how much you can grow in quite a small plot. Someone worked out around the time of the First World War that you could feed a family of four from an allotment of 50 foot by 30 foot – this became a standard plot. Peter's was half that, more 30 foot by 30 foot.

"Peter was a vegetarian by then. I'd been through my vegetarian phase and had gone back to being a carnivore because I couldn't live without bacon. Their real favourite meal was the macrobiotic thing of brown rice and vegetables. That was the Woolley Mill standard diet, and I used to go and hang out at Woolley Mill a lot." **DE**



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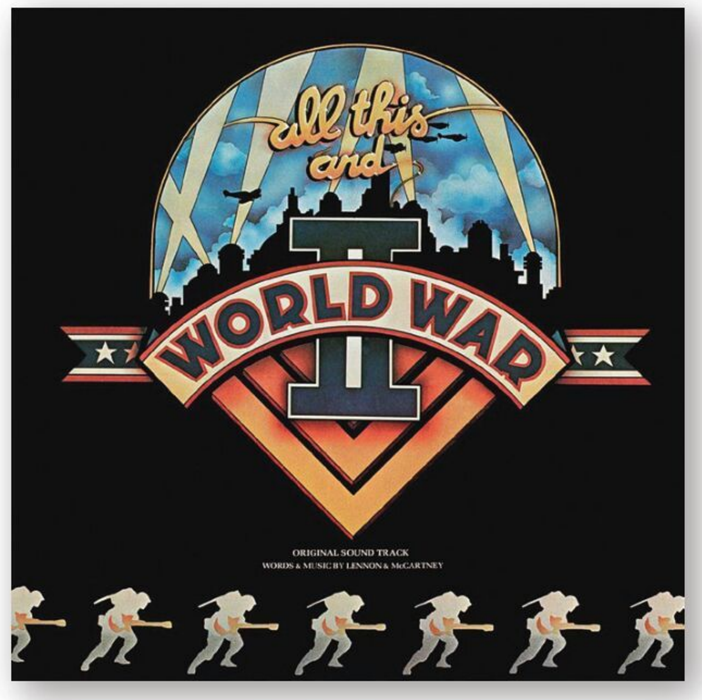


***All This And World War II* included Gabriel's cover of *Strawberry Fields Forever*.**

"Pete created a very relaxed atmosphere around him, which was great, but there was a feeling that he needed a bit of help as well," Phillips continues. "He was definitely finding his way. We now know a lot of these tracks are great, but we didn't know that at the time. It was terra incognita for him."

Although matters were to take a different turn, the results of the sessions, which unsurprisingly sounded a bit like Genesis, showed that Gabriel was ready to begin his return to the album and stage. He'd been with safe pairs of hands. It was now time to go into the unknown.

The first time the public heard Gabriel sing on record since *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* was on his heartfelt version of *Strawberry Fields Forever*, which he contributed to the soundtrack of the ill-fated film *All This And World War II*, which married stock footage of the Second World War and old MGM film clips with a soundtrack of cover versions of The Beatles' songs. Conceived by record company man Russ Regan for The Beatles themselves to supply their catalogue, musical director Lou Reizner decided it could prove more lucrative to have well-known artists provide cover versions.

> "It was only then that I realised quite how good a rhythm section Mike and Phil were together. They were astonishing."
>
> **Anthony Phillips**

Gabriel's contribution was recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra at Olympic Studios in Barnes. It underlined Gabriel's significance when you look at the company he was in: Elton John, Rod Stewart, the Bee Gees, Bryan Ferry, Frankie Valli and Tina Turner were just some of the stellar names involved. Although the film was withdrawn from cinemas after just two weeks and has never had an official DVD release, the soundtrack was a modest success, reaching No.23 on the UK albums chart on its release in November 1976. As such, it became the first official Peter Gabriel solo release.

By October 1976, Gabriel was on the other side of the Atlantic working with a team of session musicians, finally making his first solo album. After considering Todd Rundgren, Gabriel hooked up with young Canadian producer Bob Ezrin, who had made his name producing Alice Cooper and Lou Reed. Ezrin first saw Gabriel when Genesis supported Reed at Toronto's Massey Hall in 1973. Tony Smith, Gabriel's then manager, put in the call.

"When Tony asked if I would be interested in working with Peter as a solo artist, I didn't hesitate for one second," Ezrin told this writer in 2013. "He's a brilliant man and I would love to work with him."

It was imperative that they work fast and that Ezrin had a hand in picking Gabriel's team. To that end, Ezrin chose virtually *all* the album's players, trusted session hands used to working at speed with demanding artists.

"I had developed this crew of regulars that I would work with," Ezrin says. "I put them together for when I worked with solo artists who didn't come with their own band. They were very versatile – some of them were New York session players I had encountered in different situations, but in whom I'd seen a spark. These were the outlaws of the studio musician set, the guys who often felt constrained by what they were trying to do, and liked to stretch out."

These included drummer Allan Schwartzberg and Tony Levin, who would go on to become Gabriel's long-serving bassist. Gabriel added Nektar keys player Larry Fast, and for old times sake and continuity, Robert Fripp, latterly sighted with Gabriel at the Charlie Drake session, on guitar. The team worked fast, recording at Nimbus Studios in Toronto.

"Peter thrived on the characters," Ezrin continued. "He negotiated with me, asking if he could have one Brit. I felt we were doing a sports deal, like a football club needing a striker. I agreed. He said, 'Can it be Robert Fripp?' Robert perfectly rounded out this group of misfits and musical outlaws. He was the proper Brit, in total contrast to the improper Americans — and we had Canadians too. It was a very ecumenical date."

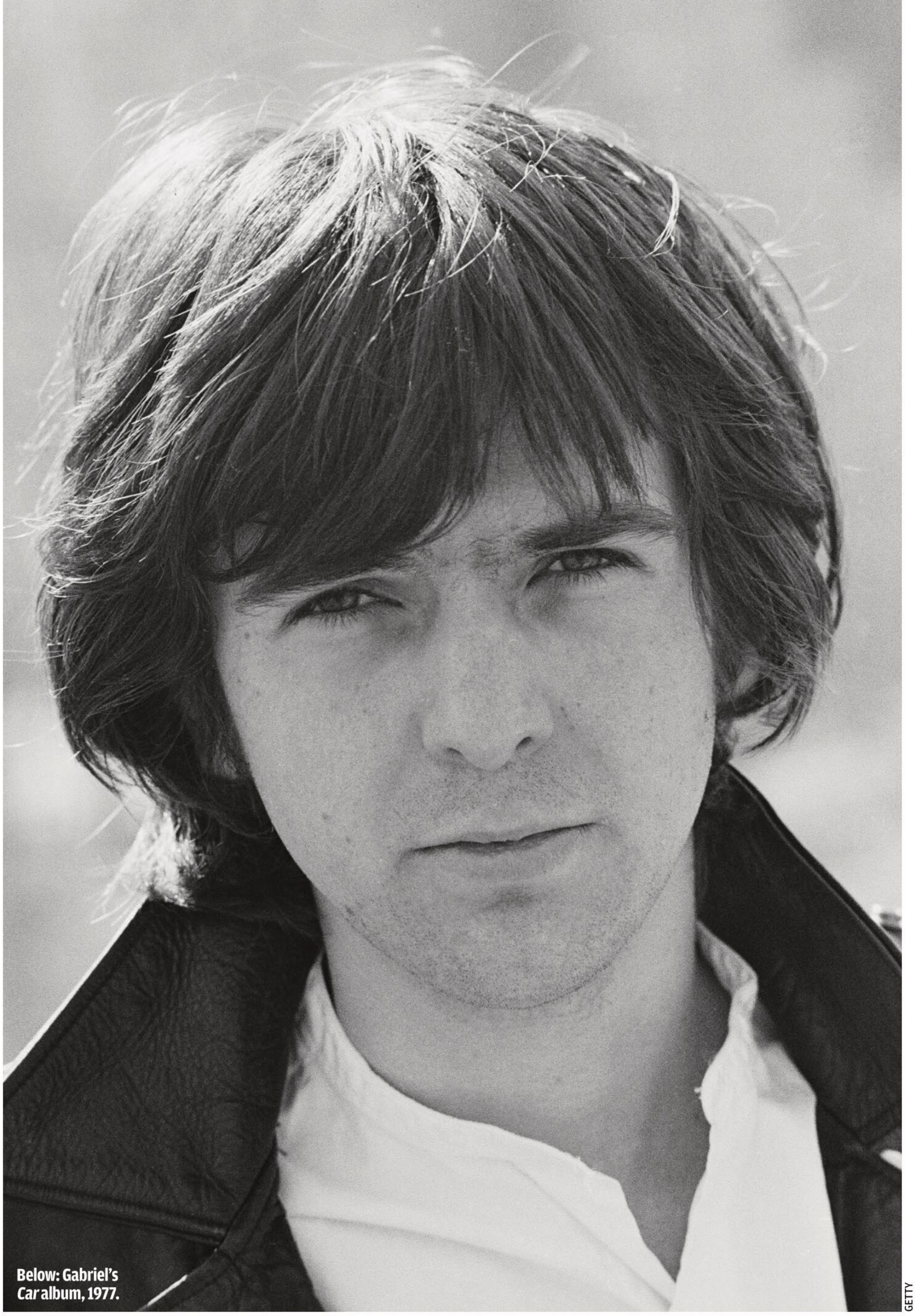
The album, simply titled *Peter Gabriel*, was released in the UK on February 25, 1977. It came encased in a Hipgnosis-designed sleeve: a heavily colourised image that featured Gabriel sat in Storm Thorgerson's rain-soaked vehicle. It had an otherworldliness about it, looking distant, strange and mysterious. It gave the album its simple, colloquial name of *Car*.

Of the album's nine tracks, two stood out clearly and established Gabriel at once as a credible artist. *Solsbury Hill* was released as a single ahead of the album and soon was sitting in the UK Top 40, becoming the first release associated with Genesis to reach the Top 10 singles chart. With it, Gabriel proved he had more than enough commercial nous to go it alone. As he said, "It's about being prepared to lose what you have for what you might get, or what you are for what you might be. It's about letting go."

A thinly veiled reference to his departure from Genesis, it's set over an infectious, acoustic guitar-driven folk groove, played by Steve Hunter. Its optimism is heart-warming and its manifesto is clear: to succeed, you must take risks. Fortune favours the brave. His choice of the line *'walked right out of the machinery'* echoes his 1975 interview where he said that Rael "feels as if he's a waste of material, part of the machinery".

Here Comes The Flood was the album's triumph. "All I know is that Peter played me *Here Comes The Flood* in my living room on our first meeting," Bob Ezrin said. "I was in the middle of producing albums for KISS and Alice Cooper. In the midst of all *that*, I went to bed singing *Here Comes The Flood* instead of my own records!"

Inspired by the writings of Carlos Castaneda and recent reading about native Americans, Gabriel was fascinated with short-wave radio, and was amazed by the way signal strength would become stronger as daylight faded. All of this fed into the tale of barriers in individuals' thought processes being broken down so anyone could see into others' minds, and



Below: Gabriel's *Car* album, 1977.

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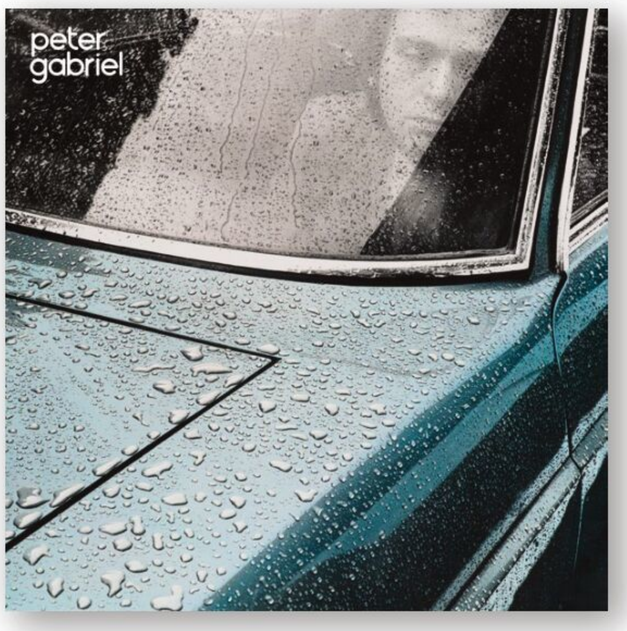


> "He's a brilliant man and I would love to work with him."
>
> **Bob Ezrin**

as Gabriel said, "those inclined to concealment would drown in it".

"What an amazing song," Ezrin said. "There's so much brilliance in this record, coming from a man in his middle 20s: the depth of wisdom and sensitivity, not to mention how musically brilliant he was then, and is still."

With a tagline of 'expect the unexpected on the new Peter Gabriel album', *Car* reached a respectable No.7 in the UK and No.38 in the US. Gabriel was pleased with this performance: "Success no longer holds the key to happiness for me," he told Barbara Charone at *Circus* magazine. "I wanted it badly once but it's an experience I had. I've got complete control now. The rock business is a strange hybrid of hypocrisy. You get to the point where you're not really being yourself. You're selling something. You get the feeling that the rock star is some sort of teenage creation realised by people who are no longer teenagers."

Most definitely *not* a teenager, Peter Gabriel's retreat to his cabbages lasted less than six months. However, the 20 months, his 'gap year' in which it was set, and the empowerment it offered him, was to reverberate throughout his career to this very day: if you can walk away from what you had worked so hard for and start again, put your family first, you can do anything.

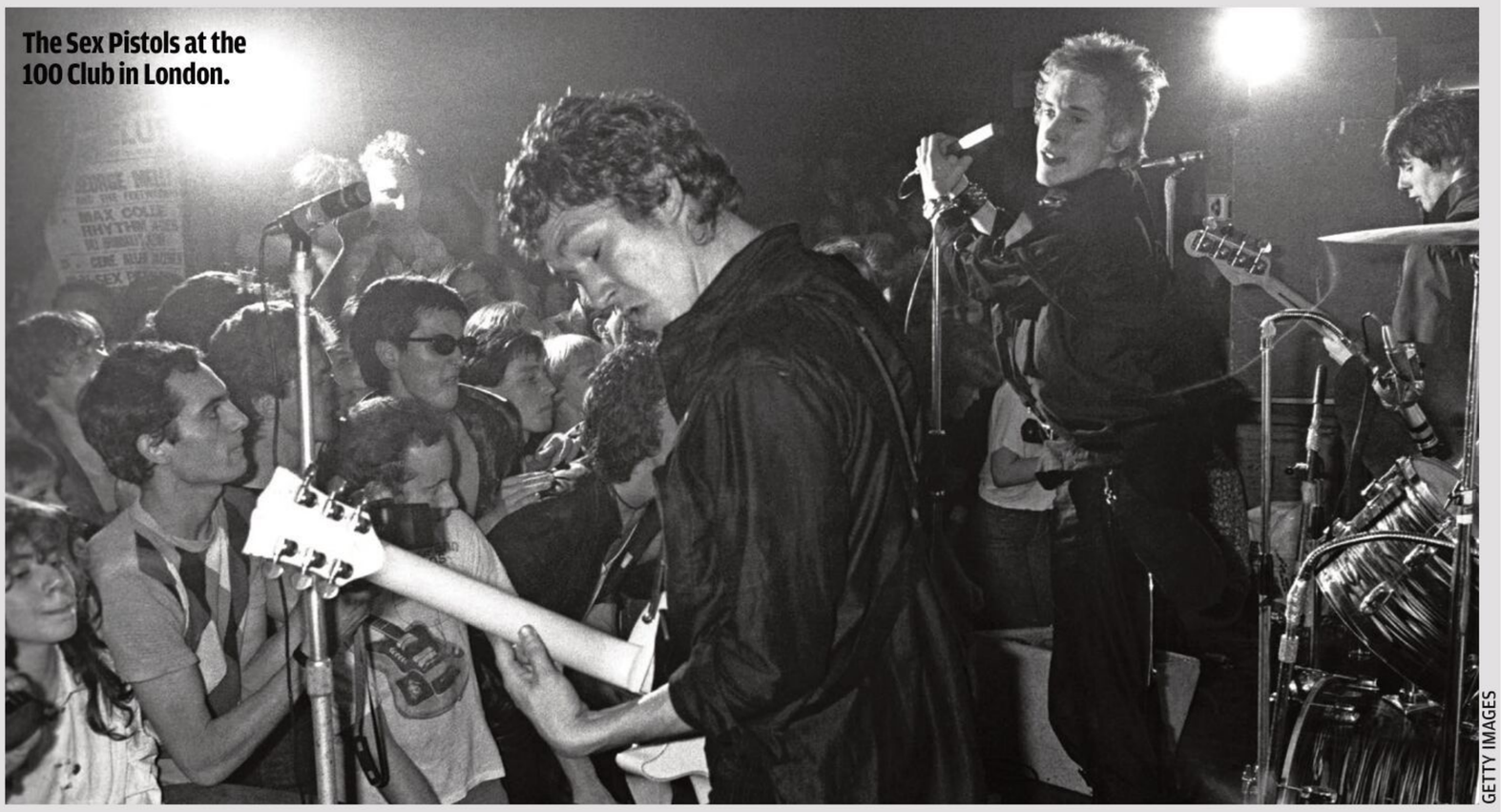
It was a period of the most incredible cleansing and confidence building. Stepping out from behind the flower and growing up in public. His prolonged absence from the pop eye seemed an eternity — today, in the 21st century, a year off is common; longer is positively expected to allow tour cycles to finish and marketing departments to work through any residual magic or life there may be left in a product.

"Generally, there's only one golden egg in a band, as far as business goes," Gabriel reflected in 1977. "It's very rare when people split up or break off that you get two successful acts. The chances are remote. The longer I didn't do anything, the bigger the question mark. I wouldn't describe myself as a golden egg yet. But I'm in a strong position — certainly much stronger than I was a year ago."

Within a handful of years, with the release of *So*, Gabriel did indeed become this golden egg. And once he did, with that gold he walked right out of the machinery again. This time, he wouldn't have to borrow his friend's piano — he would set up his own studio and label. He would become the factory owner, allowing him the freedom to take as much time between releases as possible. For sure, the 26-month gap in releases between *The Lamb...* and his first album now seems like barely a nanosecond compared to the aeon it has been since the release of *Up...*

BOLLOCKS AND BRUCEY

How the sound and spirit of the Sex Pistols and Springsteen fed into Gabriel's work.



The Sex Pistols at the 100 Club in London.

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Gabriel's sabbatical allowed him time to fully appreciate the music of others, and he was deeply receptive to the change in the air. Before punk ripped up the rule book, the arrival on British shores of Bruce Springsteen had a profound effect on Gabriel. On November 18, 1975, he went to see Springsteen and his E Street Band at their debut UK concert at London's Hammersmith Odeon.

"I remember Peter phoning me and saying he'd gone to see Springsteen and that he was very impressed with him," David Stopps, a close friend who ran Friars in Aylesbury, told this writer in 2013. "He was overwhelmed with how good he was live – it had a major effect on him."

Gabriel's writing could now absorb all his influences, away from the constraints of his band. "Springsteen was a huge influence," says Richard Macphail. "He wouldn't stop going on about that – it really made a huge impression."

Gabriel has said this concert was second only to his fabled viewing of Otis Redding on the Stax/Volt Revue in the 60s. Stopps added: "I later saw Peter at Hammersmith Odeon on his first tour and you could see the influence of Springsteen on his show."

This infatuation increased when Roy Bittan of the E Street Band played on *Scratch*. Later, Gabriel was to appear on Steve Van Zandt's *Sun City* project, before working with the Boss himself on 1988's *Human Rights Now!* tour.

Gabriel was to see another life-changing concert the year after he saw Springsteen when he went to London's Oxford Street and saw the Sex Pistols at one of the 10 fabled gigs they played at the 100 Club that year. Already enamoured with the stripped-down bombast of Springsteen, Gabriel knew this was another part of the jigsaw of change, and that something new was in the air.

"He was deeply impressed," Richard Macphail says. "I was deeply unimpressed, I must say. Peter saw the bigger picture better than I did. All he talked about was the Pistols and Johnny Rotten. He loved the rawness of it – it really appealed to him."

Although hardly ready to go to Pistols-like extremes, both these artists showed clearly to Gabriel that he could easily attempt something different. While in Toronto recording *Car*, he and Larry Fast went to see the Ramones. Gabriel seemed to have escaped the enormous backlash that progressive rock was getting in the media – it was as if he'd jumped off the juggernaut exactly at the right time.

With punk's 'year zero' revisionist approach, all of these new characters – many of whom were of a similar age or only slightly younger than the bands they were taking swipes at – pretended they had no time for any of the music they had spent the previous three years listening to. Gabriel was pleased that *Car* was displayed in Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood's SEX shop in Kings Road and that Nick Kent, then the hottest, most revered rock critic, was onside with his new work. **DE**

Bruce Springsteen onstage at Hammersmith Odeon in 1975, his first performance in England.

GETTY IMAGES

THE PROG INTERVIEW

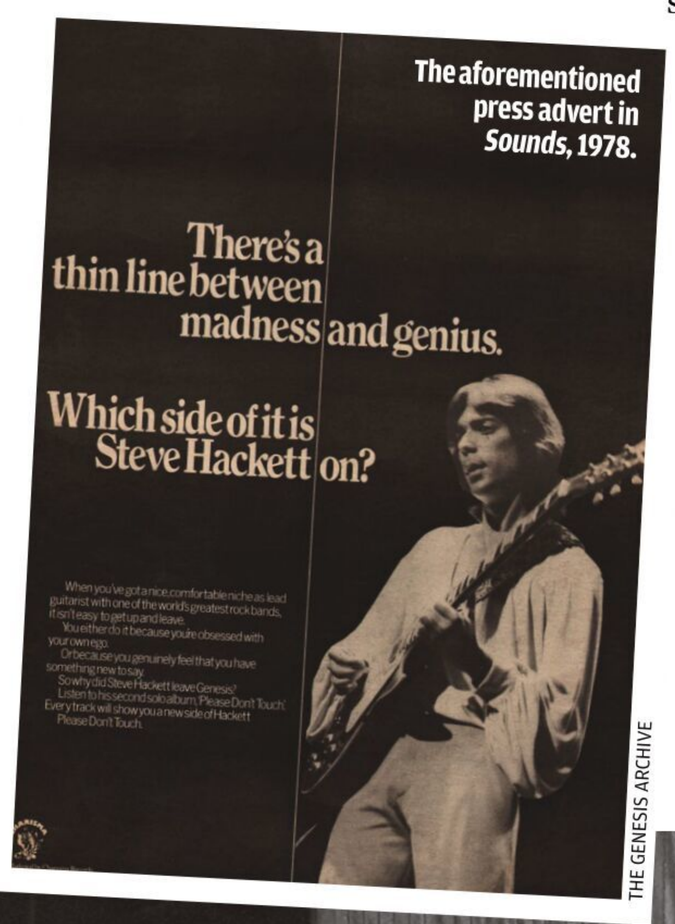
STEVE HACKETT

In 2017, **Steve Hackett** embarked on a tour to promote his new album *The Night Siren* and to revisit *Wind & Wuthering* to celebrate its 40th anniversary. With a varied and illustrious career behind him and before him, the gentle guitarist spoke to *Prog* about ex-bandmates, the joys of going solo and his "Nurofen hands"...

Words: Mark Blake **New portraits:** Tina Korhonen

A press advert for Steve Hackett's second solo album, 1978's *Please Don't Touch*, showed the recently ex-Genesis guitarist, eyes closed in concentration, fingers shaping a chord, beneath the headline: "There's a thin line between madness and genius. Which side is Steve Hackett on?"

Nearly 40 years later, that question remains unanswered. But the Steve Hackett who arrives this morning at a rehearsal studio in Putney, south-west London, seems to be straddling the line rather well. Shy, polite and quietly witty, this 67-year-old possible 'mad genius' has hidden depths: a man with a deep interest in spiritual matters who claims to have healing powers – or "Nurofen hands" as he jokingly calls them. But more on that later...


There's a thin line between madness and genius.
Which side of it is Steve Hackett on?
When you've got a nice comfortable niche as lead guitarist with one of the world's greatest rock bands, it isn't easy to get up and leave.
You either do it because you're obsessed with your own ego.
Or because you genuinely feel that you have something new to say.
So why did Steve Hackett leave Genesis?
Listen to his second solo album, 'Please Don't Touch'.
Every track will show you a new side of Hackett.
Please Don't Touch.
The aforementioned press advert in *Sounds*, 1978.

THE GENESIS ARCHIVE

Stephen Richard Hackett was born to play music. He could blow a tune on the harmonica by the time he was four, and was in several aspiring pop groups (Canterbury Glass, anyone?) before joining Genesis in late 1970. Hackett's fleet-fingered solos and melancholy tone helped define the likes of *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight*, *Firth Of Fifth*, *Carpet Crawlers* and *Entangled*. Then he left to go solo, flitting between mind-scrambling prog rock, acoustic and Latin music, and more recently exploring his old group's back catalogue with the *Genesis Revisited* albums and tours.

Hackett has experienced commercially challenging times. But 2012's *Genesis Revisited II* proved a welcome boost which has carried over to his subsequent solo career. His latest work, *The Night Siren*, is a call for peace and unity in troubled times, and a whistle-stop musical tour of the globe, from Iceland to Peru via the Middle East and more. "I think of myself as a bumbler," Hackett says, settling down in his chair with a wary smile and a mug of tea. "But occasionally I have insights and bumble no more..."

> Let's put it this way: my function in Genesis was completely different to how they perceived my function to be. I will tell what that is when I complete my book. I *have* started writing it but I am very busy, so it will take a while.

Quiet World in 1970, L-R: Neil Heather, Phil Henderson, Steve Hackett, Dick Driver, John Heather, Sean O'Mally, Lea Heather, Eddy Hines.

ESOTERIC/PRESS

This new album is 'world music' in the real sense of the word.
Yes. For me, though, it's the natural consequence of having visited a whole ton of places. The idea of a musical fellowship thrills me. I love working with people from Iceland, Peru, Hungary, Azerbaijan, the USA, the UK, Israel, Palestine... The second song, *Martian Sea*, has something which sounds like a sitar, and by the end of it there's an Arabian oud and flutes going on. That one was a deliberate attempt to get

Steve Hackett:
the benign dictator?

some free-range 60s sounds on the album.

You grew up near London's Kings Road in the 60s: surely this was the perfect place for a young musician?
We lived on a housing estate in Pimlico, but near Chelsea, so there were exotic things happening on the doorstep. From the age of 12 I'd look at what was around and often passed the odd Rolling Stone in the street. I became fascinated by music at a time when every other track on Radio Luxembourg seemed like a masterpiece. You don't know what you got, till it's gone – to quote Joni Mitchell. We thought the 60s would go on forever.

IMAGINATIVE GUITARIST/ writer seeks involvement with receptive musicians, determined to strive beyond existing stagnant music forms. — Steve 730 2445.

Above: the ad Hackett placed in *Melody Maker* that attracted Phil Collins in 1970.

on the dole. But I didn't want to feel like a sponger. So I had five years of ordinary jobs after leaving school. One of them was a temp job with a surveyor where my responsibilities began and ended with banging nails into the pavement around Victoria Street. Some of my nails are still there. I liked it because I could switch my mind off and think about music.

Your first Genesis concert was at London's City University in 1971.
I remember the rest of the band not being at all happy at the end of the show, and me thinking it was all my fault.

Mike Rutherford described you at the time like so: "Black corduroy jacket, black jeans, black shirt, black hair and moustache... Steve was all black."
I still am! [Looks down, laughing at his black jeans, trainers and fleece.] Still dressed in black.

Were you very shy then?
Yes, I was. But it was a funny thing being thrown into a world of people who all seemed to speak Chinese. I didn't understand a word they said.

And Then There Were Four: Genesis during their *A Trick Of The Tail* photo shoot.

CLIPPINGS AND GENESIS PRESS RELEASE IMAGE: THE GENESIS ARCHIVE

Your first group, Quiet World, came from that scene in 1970.
Yes, by which time the music had changed again and you had formally trained musicians working with the hippies, and something extraordinary was born out of that. I'm happy to name those who were a big influence on me personally and Genesis: Procol Harum, Jethro Tull, King Crimson, Yes. Those bands were all like separate research facilities.

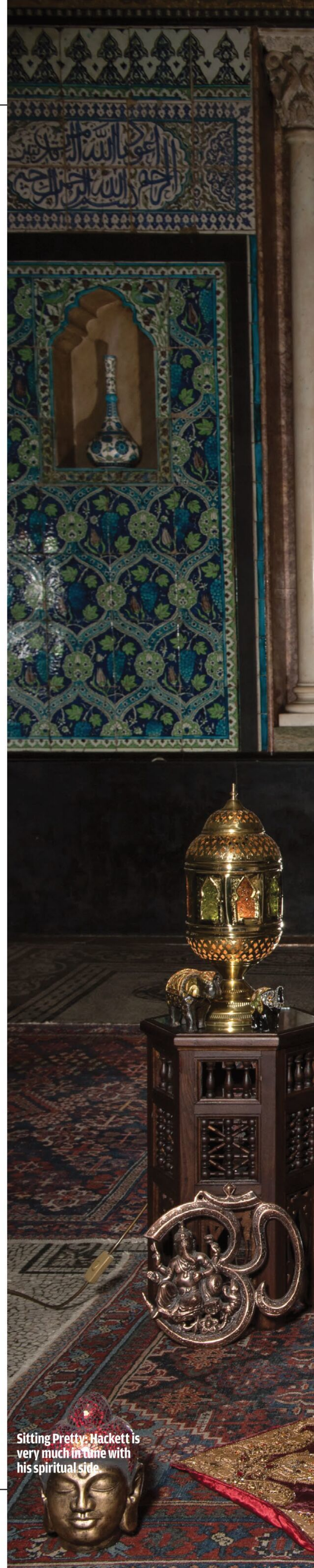
How did you support yourself around this time?
A mate worked at the Labour Exchange and offered to put me

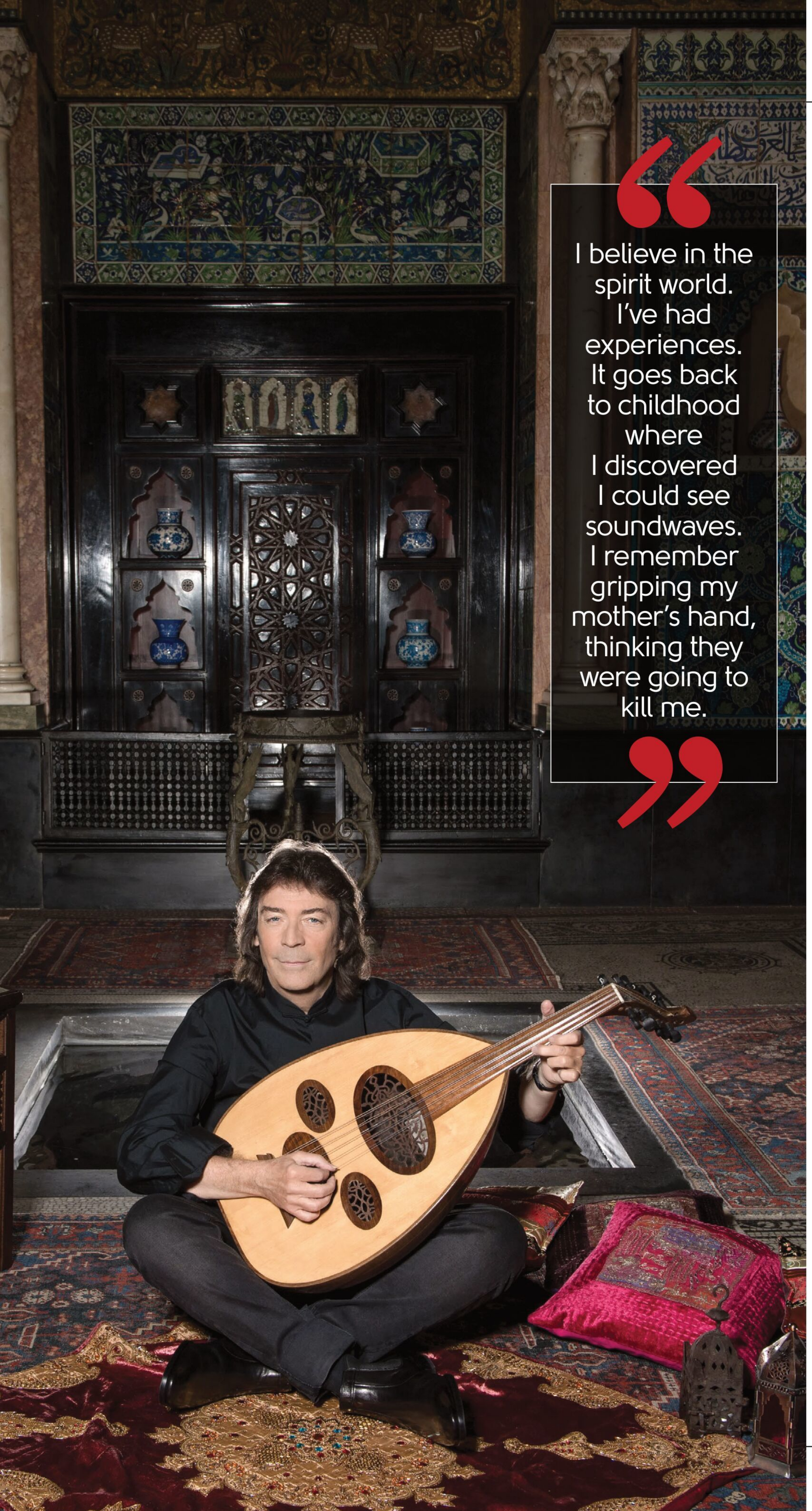
Right: the flyer for Hackett's first gig with Genesis, January 1971.

Apparently, Phil Collins was so drunk he kept missing the drums. Were you aware of this?
I'd never done a Genesis gig before so I didn't have anything to compare it to. I thought, "Perhaps the drummer always plays like that [laughs]." But I was busy trying to control my guitar feedback – and failing.

Mike Rutherford's a bit of a mumbler, though, isn't he?
Yes [begins perfect Rutherford impression]: "Talks very quickly like this, public school, father's military background... blah, blah... What do you think Steve?" "Er, I'm sorry, I didn't hear a word of that" – and I'm still munching on this biscuit. We came from different backgrounds.

Was it a happy time?
I look back on it with great affection. My rite of passage coincided with the rise of a band becoming world famous, quite by chance, I think. But we applied ourselves to it almost like being in the civil service. There was this aspect of Mike, Peter [Gabriel's] and Tony [Banks']


Sitting Pretty: Hackett is very much in tune with his spiritual side.



> I believe in the spirit world. I've had experiences. It goes back to childhood where I discovered I could see soundwaves. I remember gripping my mother's hand, thinking they were going to kill me.

formal education [at Charterhouse school] which permeated everything. For instance, I couldn't understand why rehearsals ended at six o'clock, and everybody downed tools and went home. But that's how it was with Genesis.

You also sat down on stage for the first few years. What was with the stools?
I was told when I joined that we all sat down on stage, apart from Pete. Pete was the show and we were like the pit orchestra. We stayed seated until Phil took over, and Mike said [starts mumbling], "Right, Phil's singing, we don't know how this is going to go, we should all stand up…" That's when I thought, "I better get some stage clothes and shave this moustache." We suddenly became a different band.

You once described Genesis as "repressed English guys". How much did that repression and Englishness influence the music?
That's where the storytelling comes from. If you take guys who are removed from the world of women completely for a while, most of the romance they experience is not going to be on a Rolling Stones level. It's going to be on the level of, "I am reading Greek mythology and this particular goddess said this…" That's why the world of literature permeated early Genesis' work.

There are also literary references in your solo work. The title of the 1984 album *Till We Have Faces* and the 1978 song *Narnia* both came from CS Lewis. What are you reading right now?
I've just finished *Shantaram* by Gregory David Roberts, about an Australian drug addict, who breaks out of a brutal jail and makes his way to India. He ends up living in a shanty town, where he starts an unofficial clinic. So, on one level, he's doing this almost saintly work and on another he's involved in organised crime. It's poetic and violent and a wonderful contemporary account of India.

Above: eighth solo album *Till We Have Faces*.

Shantaram seems to tap into _The Night Siren_'s global theme. The first song on the album, _Behind The Smoke_, addresses the refugee crisis, and some of your ancestors were refugees.

My ancestors escaped pogroms in Poland in the late 1800s. They travelled in fear of their lives to Portugal, and some later made their way to England, changed their name to Davis and survived in the Jewish East End of London. I had an uncle, Jack Davis, who was the oldest serving soldier in the First World War. He lived to be 108. I met him in the last year of his life and he greeted me with, "Congratulations on your success." What an extraordinary thing for a 108-year-old man to say. I replied, "Congratulations on *your* success."

Your first solo album, _Voyage Of The Acolyte_, was inspired by the tarot. Are you a believer?

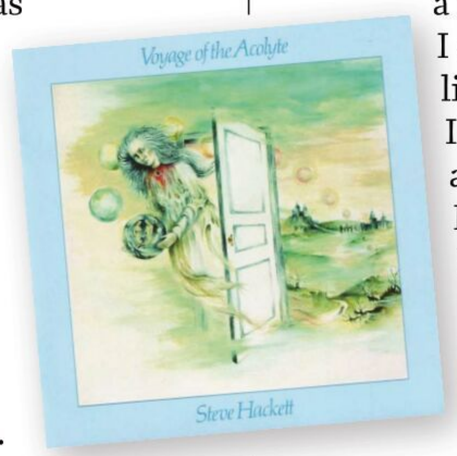
I believe in the spirit world. I've had experiences. It goes back to childhood where I discovered I could see soundwaves. I remember gripping my mother's hand, thinking they were going to kill me.

What does a soundwave look like, then?

They were these lines in the air [holds out his hand], going *'phutt, phutt'* — like electrical charges. But they stopped just before they reached me. I stopped seeing them when I became an adult.

When did you became interested in the spirit world?

When I was in Quiet World, the Heather brothers [Hackett's bandmates, John, Lee and Neil] had a father who was a medium. I used to visit the spiritualists at 33 Belgrave Square, the building [Sherlock Holmes author and spiritualist] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle gave to them. You usually saw these little old ladies who'd give you a reading. I went once because I had a pain in my toe. They said, "We'll ask our brothers and sisters in the spirit world to help you," and I walked out of this place and the pain had gone. Then I discovered that in a small way I could do healing for other people.



How did you find this out?

I was 25 and in a medium circle where would-be mediums practised on each other. One of them said she could see a blue light in my stomach, which, apparently, shows an ability to heal. I'm not infallible, I'm not professional, I don't take money. But it's something I do.

So, if I said I was in pain, could you heal me?

I might be able to help, but I can't fix anything life threatening. It's not, "Take up your bed and walk." But if someone has a headache or a backache and asks me to help, my hands kick in like a battery — boom! I experience a feeling like pins and needles. I think of it as an alternative to a pill. My hands can "do Nurofen" [laughs].

You once described your solo career as "a gigantic experiment and a big hit every 10 years". _Defector_, _Cured_ and _Highly Strung_ were all Top 20 albums in the 80s. Were you under pressure then to sell more records?

The 80s brought certain pressures to many acts. I remember Eric Clapton saying, "Every year the knife cuts deeper," as he was being edited by the people at his record company. I did have a hit single with *Cell 151* [Number 66 in 1983]. Charisma Records wanted a hit single from me so we did everything necessary to achieve that.

Did that same mindset influence GTR, the group you formed with Steve Howe in the mid-80s?

Steve and I felt we could bridge the gap between Genesis and Yes, do something our fans would think was valuable, but at the same time reach a new audience. But Geffen Records, who were going to sign us, didn't want new guys in the band with Steve and I.

They wanted another Asia?

Yes. They wanted another Asia [laughs]. But we weren't prepared to sack the other guys. We signed to Arista who wanted a — quote — "hit rock band". I still think [the single] *When The Heart Rules The Mind* sounded great on American radio. We had a hit, but it wasn't sustainable. [GTR and ex-Yes manager] Brian Lane likes to divide and conquer, so he set everyone at loggerheads with each other. I should have seen it coming. Politics ruined that band.

Did that put you off being in a band again?

Well, with a solo thing, there's no agenda. I just want the best out of everyone. As a bandleader I am quite benign...

A benign dictator?

I can if I need to be. But everyone naturally does what I'd like them to do. Everyone in this group is free to insult everyone else equally [laughs].

Having a lead singer like Nad Sylvan must make performing Genesis material much easier. He has a 'Genesis voice' and he looks like a frontman with that hair.

The hair alone! Nad can 'do' Genesis. But he's probably more in the style of early Peter Gabriel — very theatrical: "Here I am dressed as Britannia, and I'm going to hold the position long enough for photographers to get the shots." That's something Nad has. He turned professional from doing this. As he's said himself, he's in his 50s, so it has happened rather late. But he still looks like a kid, like a Nordic bronzed god [laughs].

People like me who discovered Genesis through _Seconds Out_ have a real soft spot for the four-piece line-up. Do you think that era is overlooked?

Yes. Chris Squire always said his favourite Genesis album was *A Trick Of The Tail*. But in conversation people tend to say there was "The Pete Era" and "The Phil Era". They sometimes

What Might Have Been: Steves Howe (left) and Hackett, 1986.

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES

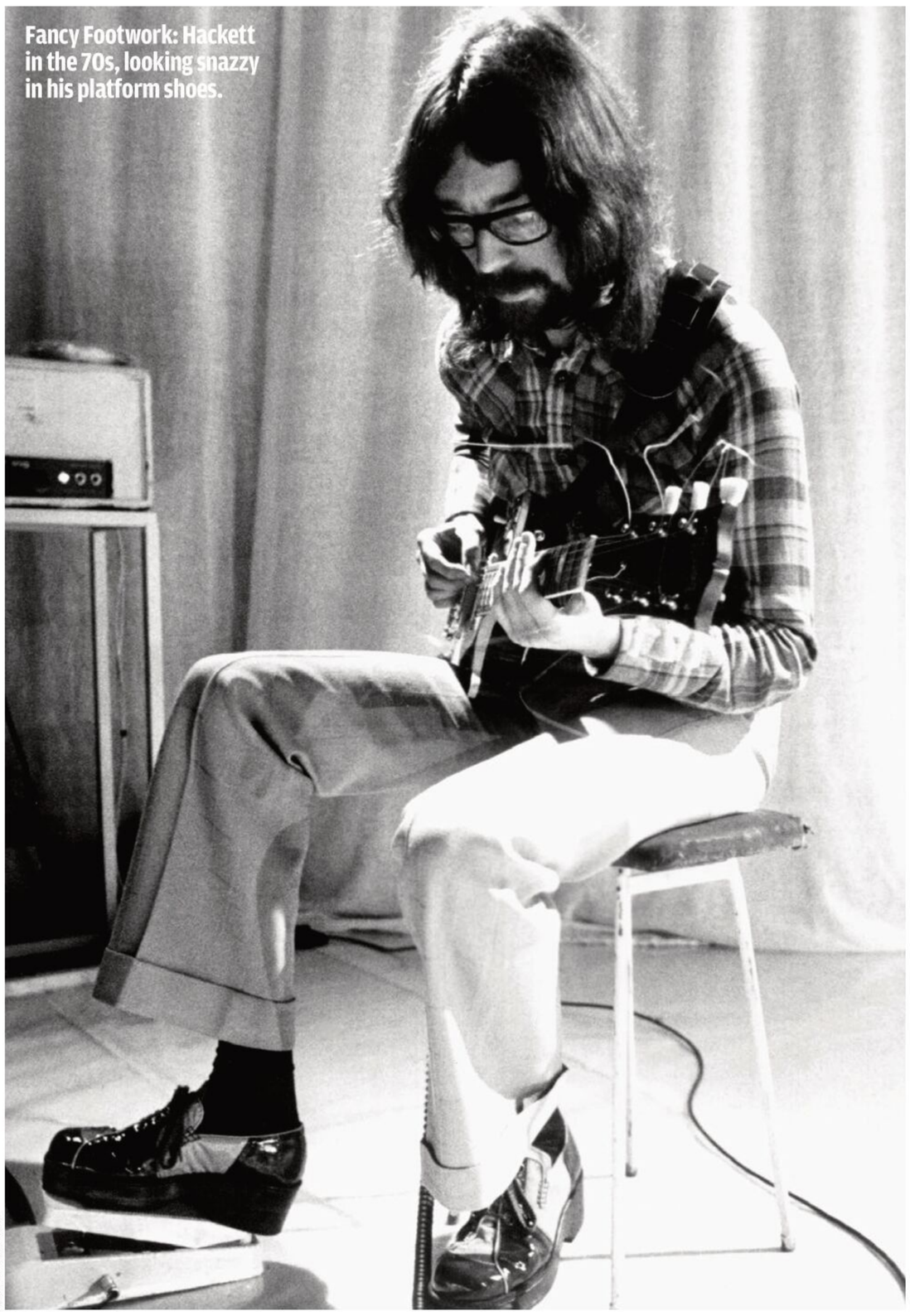
forget what came in between. I think the band was cusping at that time. The material was accessible, there were still these instrumental extravaganzas like *Wot Gorilla* and *Unquiet Slumbers For The Sleeping* — with aspects of jazz, classical and Latin music.

You're promoting *The Night Siren* but also celebrating 40 years of *Wind & Wuthering* on your tour.
It feels wonderful to be celebrating *Wind & Wuthering*. But I have resisted the idea of doing an entire album. I prefer to cherry-pick and not play the, er, weaker tracks, if I can use that expression. Sacrilege! But there are certain tracks we ditched.

What are you playing from the album?
Eleventh Earl Of Mar, One For The Vine, Blood On The Rooftops, Afterglow, ... In That Quiet Earth... and *Inside And Out* [from 1977's *Spot The Pigeon* EP], which should have gone on the album. It's a very good tune and this band does a really good version. I say that proudly, because I wondered if we could pull it off. But the spirit of the song is intact.

On the *Genesis Revisited* tour in 2014, you used to joke with the audience that "The museum is open." Do you still feel like its curator?
Yes, it's a bit like I'm keeping the museum doors open. The exhibits have been dusted off and they still shine.

Did you get any feedback from the rest of the band about *Genesis Revisited*?
There is a band policy not to comment publicly. Privately, but not publicly. Because it's a very competitive setup, I don't expect any of them to ever come to my shows. Because that could be perceived as sanctioning them, and that would be wrong. That's the unwritten Genesis rule. Whereas personally I have seen shows of Phil's, Pete's and Mike's and would go and see Tony's, if he did one.


Fancy Footwork: Hackett in the 70s, looking snazzy in his platform shoes.
GETTY IMAGES

> In conversation people tend to say there was "The Pete Era" and the "The Phil Era." They sometimes forget what came in between. I think the band was cusping at that time.

Which did you enjoy the most?
[Long pause] I enjoyed Pete's the most, especially the stuff he did around the time of his third and fourth albums. He and I spent a bit of time together during that period. I thought with that third album, he'd developed a style of his own. Pete said he'd taken a radical step in what seemed like a less romantic direction. I think the subsequent album was perhaps more... ethnic.

Most of your album, *Till We Have Faces*, was recorded in Brazil at that same time.
Yes. I became immersed in the world of Brazilian percussion. I played the album to Pete and he said, "Can you give me some phone numbers? I'm going to Brazil." People say Pete is "Mister Ethnic", but I played thumb piano, [zither-like string instrument] psaltery and [South American percussion instrument] rainstick with Genesis, though it wasn't credited. What links Pete's approach and mine is that we both try and work with people from different backgrounds.

Presumably you've read Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford's autobiographies. Do you think they fairly represented your role in Genesis?
I've read them both. Let's put it this way: my function in Genesis was completely different to how they perceived my function to be. I will tell what that is when I complete my book. I *have* started writing it but I am very busy, so it will take a while.

When you walked into the room for that meeting with Gabriel, Banks, Collins and Rutherford in 2005, how confident were you of a five-piece reunion?
I was told to arrive at a certain time, but the meeting had already convened, and by the time I arrived they had already fallen out [sighs]. The idea was for the five of us to do some shows around the anniversary of *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* and a possible musical. Tony didn't want to do the musical... But the agenda was set before I arrived.

As the keeper of the old Genesis flame, what archival releases would you like released?
Personally, I hope the bootlegs are officially sanctioned. On the bootlegs from *The Lamb...*, you can hear us going to town on all these atonal things, and that was largely my influence. Put them out! But I don't control the purse strings.

What happens after this album and tour? Or do you not plan that far ahead?
There are a ton of dates planned for this year, and new territories opening up, which makes it hard to think any further. You know, for a long time I had to work very hard to get people's attention. That's changed. I never wanted pupils or disciples, but now people want to know me and ask me "How did you do that?" I find it all highly amusing, but it's good. I guess I must be doing something right.

Hackett's latest tour sees him promoting new album *The Night Siren* (right) and revisiting *Wind & Wuthering* (below).

"Taking the microphone off its stand was what 'singers' did, I wasn't ready for that yet."

When eccentric lead singer Peter Gabriel left after six albums, it seemed all over for **Genesis**. Here's how the "the guy-next-door" drummer saved the day, starting with their first date as a new band in 1976.

Words: Chris Roberts **Eyewitness photos:** Jim Fisk

Thirty six years on, after a stellar, record-breaking career, Phil Collins, now 61 and retired from music due to injury, still vividly remembers his first show as lead singer for Genesis.

Canada – "because it was always strong for us" – had been chosen as the location: London, Ontario first, then Kitchener. A thousand thoughts were rushing through his head on March 25, 1976. "What do I wear? What do I do? I had big shoes to fill. I could sing, but could I talk? I had the goodwill of the audience, but not the security blanket of my drums. Once we'd got a couple of songs out of the way, though, I felt: I can do this."

Genesis fans were onside: they wanted the band to survive original vocalist Peter Gabriel's exit.

Prematurely written off by the press as a backing band without a leader, they now had underdog appeal. "*A Trick Of The Tail* was a bright light," says Collins, "and they preferred that we'd made things work within ourselves." Mike Rutherford recalls in the Genesis memoir *Genesis: Chapter & Verse* that in the first break between songs, "I saw Phil go up front with a piece of paper in his hand, shaking, so nervous. But it worked great. Phil had experience from his [acting school] youth of being on stage: he was comfortable there, and the audience wanted to like him. As some of our songs were slightly distant, atmospheric, dark, Phil's more down-to-earth presence on stage counteracted the heavier parts of the set. He reduced the tension and allowed people to relax between the songs."

The 1976 tour then swept across the States before arriving in England in June and continuing through Europe. It was an unqualified success, with the band honing a set list that accommodated their new, more accessible material alongside highlights of the earlier, Gabriel era. Yet it nearly hadn't happened, as

> **"I had the goodwill of the audience, but not the security blanket of my drums…"**
> ***Phil Collins***

Daylight robbery: Phil steals the limelight.

Taking it in his stride: Phil gives 'em his vest shot.

The Tail wags: Bill Bruford, Mike Rutherford and Phil Collins unveil the new Genesis in London, Ontario, March 25, 1976.

with Gabriel's departure, the remaining members wondered if they had any future as a unit. How would they replace their charismatic frontman? Could they come up with songs? Where would they find a new singer? And if they did, would he be given a fair crack of the whip?

MOUSTACHE IMPACT!

Most of the answers were, as decades of commercial triumph were to prove, closer to home than they initially realised. Collins, simultaneously playing with experimental outfit Brand X, at first assumed Genesis would carry on as an instrumental quartet. That notion, he laughs, lasted "about a day". Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford pointed out that they were and had always been songwriters, and needed a singer. Many luckless souls auditioned before the band realised the perfect solution was right under their noses. Steve Hackett, along with Yes vocalist Jon Anderson, went to Collins' first wedding and urged Collins to consider the role. Phil's vocal contribution to the 1975 Steve Hackett solo album *Voyage Of The Acolyte* had been much admired by the guitarist. Collins says he's also "read somewhere" that his wife encouraged him to do it, "which is quite possible". In the end, he says, he showed up at a rehearsal and said, "Well, I guess I'm going to have to do it. As long as I can find a drummer I like." Because of course by 'promoting' Collins to vocals, Genesis were, to some extent, sacrificing another asset: the fact that they had one of the world's best and most in-demand drummers.

Collins' friend from Brand X, Bill Bruford, formerly of Yes and King Crimson, came in to bridge the gap for this tour. With his pedigree, he was, to the fans, "friendly fire", reckons Collins. The new situation also lent Genesis the possibility of using two drummers at times. "When they were playing together on *The Cinema Show* [from *Selling England By The Pound*]," Banks has said, "that became one of the strongest moments in the show." Hackett's memory of Bruford's impact is even more specific: "Bill was a star in his own right. He helped our confidence on stage no end. I even shaved off my moustache. At last I was without facial hair!"

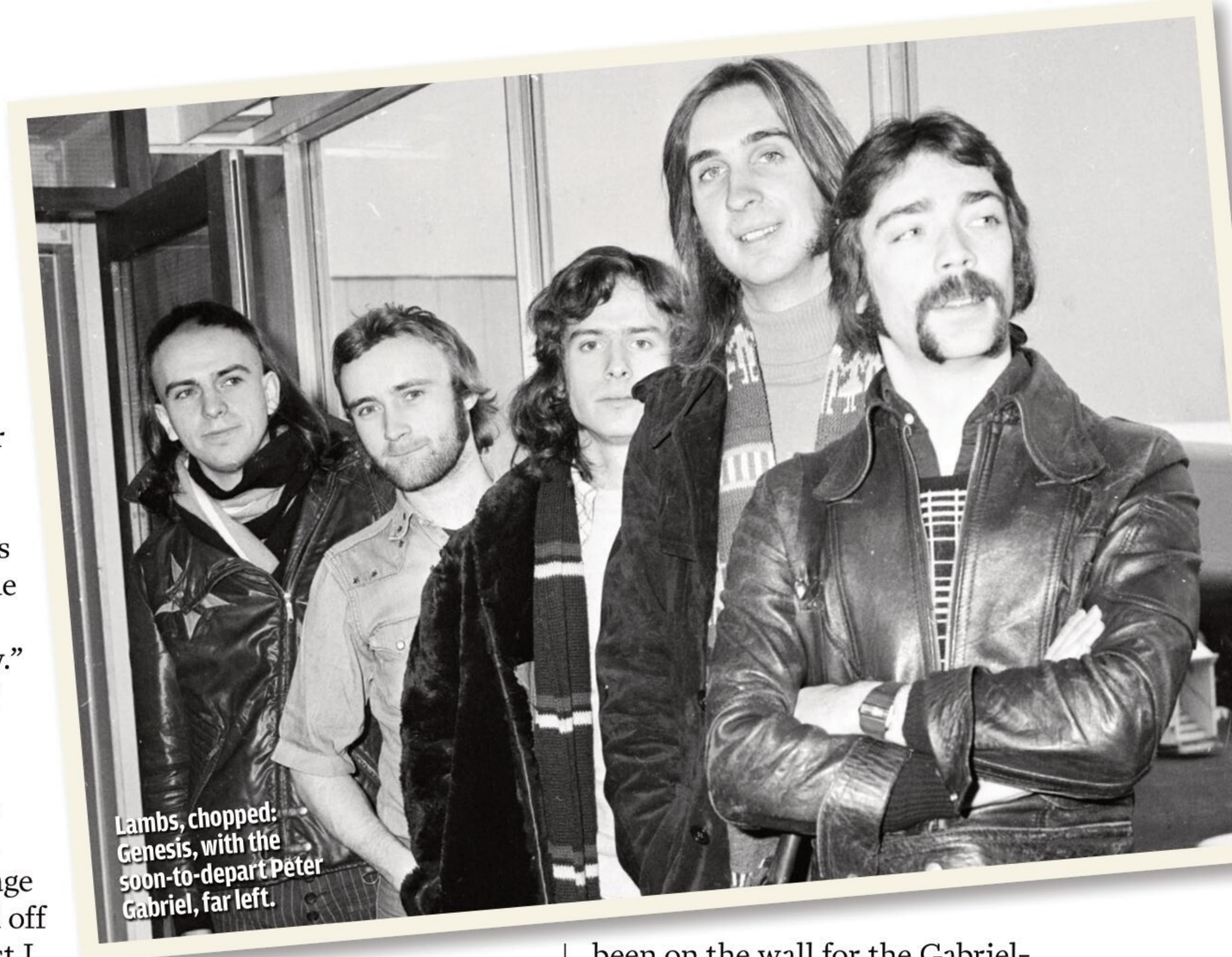
The most radical change, though, was upfront, centre stage, on the microphone. Banks says he knew Phil had a lovely voice, but wasn't sure that he'd "want" to do it. At the time, he ponders, "He didn't seem to have... the gravitas." Yet as the auditions had revealed, he "sounded great" and was the right, if not the most obvious, choice.

Producer David Hentschel has said, "Phil really half-nominated himself... the timbre of his voice was not dissimilar to Peter's... but there needed to be a push to convince the other guys." Collins, though, denies that he was "ambitious". "I'd got myself a nice little reputation as a drummer, and I was happy with that. This was the last thing on my mind. I had no affinity with the idea of walking out from behind the drums and becoming a band's singer: the guy who wiggled his bum, who people looked at. Over the years there have been people claiming I nudged Peter out. That's complete rubbish."

Behind the scenes, the writing had been on the wall for the Gabriel-Genesis line-up for some time. Although Gabriel, Banks and Rutherford had grown up together at Charterhouse School and formed the band, their close friendship had become strained by the pressures and rigours of touring and recording. Gabriel, frustrated by the democratic band format, was embarking on parenthood and, after quitting, took some time out to "grow vegetables" and recharge his batteries before getting his solo career motoring. During the recording of their 1974 double album *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, he'd often be writing lyrics in one room while the others wrote music in another. "So," muses Collins now, "you can look back and see where the trip wires were."

Gabriel had informed the band of his decision before *The Lamb...* was finished and just before the subsequent exhaustive tour, on which the band played this lengthy concept album, as yet unreleased, in full, to often bewildered audiences blasted with innovative lighting and laser stabs. He honoured his commitments, and Hackett recalled that, "more and more shows were put in because nobody wanted to say goodbye to him. Nobody's departure from a band is without rancour, but it was as gentlemanly as it could be." Banks hints that there was some begrudging of the press-led notion that Gabriel was the main man and the others just his backing band fleshing out his ideas.

Perhaps Gabriel at first had more faith in the others' ability to succeed than they did. "It was difficult," he said in *Genesis: Chapter & Verse*, "because they didn't understand why I'd want to go when we were about to achieve something we'd worked so hard for. They perhaps felt I was sabotaging what was possibly their one big chance.



Lambs, chopped: Genesis, with the soon-to-depart Peter Gabriel, far left.

> **"Over the years there have been people claiming that I nudged Peter out. That's complete rubbish." *Phil Collins***

WITNESS

JIM FISK

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime event!" says the then-teenage snapper.

"The London Arena [since demolished] could hold a few thousand at the most and is more used to rollerskates than rockers. Before the show, I wandered in with my *Dark Side of the Moon* stickered briefcase (was I a roadie?) and watched the band set up. Everyone was ejected for the sound check. Come show time we dashed up to third-ish row on the hard concrete floor. When the lights dimmed, the place, small as it is, was packed. Phil perhaps a little tentative at first, but the crowd responds and so does Phil. Bill Bruford, in his Boston Bruins T-Shirt was Mr Perfection, as usual. I'd missed the *Lamb...* tour in Toronto for a physics exam (poor choice) and my buds were concerned Phil couldn't cut it. He cut it good. *Robbery, Assault And Battery* and Phil is dressed the part. "A Flower?" he says as the huge green and yellow tulip explodes into view. I'm snapping pictures and I'd swear Phil and Mike are posing for me. Over 35 years later, and as I look at them now they still amaze me. Mike's double-necking is masterful. But the Phil and Bill percussion duel was incredible. Speed, technical excellence, and musical too. Tony perched on the edge of the small stage, quiet, just doing his job and doing it well. Steve, all in white, soars to heights unreachable by mortal man. In the small hall, the sound seemed to wrap around us. Bass pedals grabbed my guts and shook them like there's no tomorrow. Encore? Encore! Sure, I regret like hell not seeing Gabriel do *Lamb...* (although he did a bit in his first solo tour), but when the house lights came up I knew we'd witnessed a once-in-a-lifetime event."

With stand-in drummer and ex-Yes man Bill Bruford in 1976.

GETTY X2

I believe to this day that I had much more confidence in the band's ability to transcend my departure than they did themselves."

REINVENTION

Collins remembers exactly where he was when Gabriel told him he was leaving. "I was in his hotel room in Manchester. I love Peter dearly, but I just assumed we'd carry on. Then as I'd been Peter's stooge onstage, singing all the back-up vocals and more, the job of teaching the songs to the guys coming in to audition fell to me."

Rutherford, Banks, Collins and Hackett were delighted with the new material they'd come up with for *A Trick Of The Tail*, the likes of *Squonk*, *Dance On A Volcano*, *Ripples*... and *Entangled* convincing them they'd been right to carry on. *Squonk* played a major part in deciding the course of the transition. None of the singers auditioning had hit a home run, but one was in pole position. They got him in to record *Squonk*, but the key was too high and the results disappointing. Collins chuckles, with hindsight, that the band never took the courtesy of asking the singer what key suited him, adding that they never gave him that courtesy either in later years: "I had to make do," he says.

So, having been pencilled in to perhaps sing one or two of the softer songs, Collins sang *Squonk* (inspired by the drum sound on Led Zeppelin's *Kashmir*), confirming that he could handle tougher, heavier tracks too. The album was completed, everyone was getting along famously, and somehow, more by accident than design, Phil was the new Genesis singer. The tour that could have been an epitaph became a celebration, and the dawn of a new phase in the band's remarkable career.

Of course, had *A Trick Of The Tail* tanked, the reinvention would have fallen flat. "But the album came out and it was a sudden turnaround,"

> **"I said: Okay, I'll give it a go, but don't expect me to wear all those costumes!" *Phil Collins***

says Rutherford. "We'd been dismissed: 'Gabriel leaves, it's all over'. Then it came out and people liked it and the reviews were very good." Banks emphasises that the reception for *The Lamb*... had been, for all its subsequent acclaim, "very mixed. The fans weren't ecstatic about it in the way they were about *Foxtrot* or *Selling England*.... So this gave *Trick*... a chance: people who found Peter a bit difficult perhaps preferred it being a little less dense." Released in February 1976, it went top three in the UK (and hung around, voted album of the year by the readers of *Melody Maker*), and went gold in the States. According to Tony Banks, it doubled the band's previous album sales, and helped to solve another issue: at the time of Gabriel's leaving, Genesis were almost half a million dollars in debt.

UNPRETENTIOUS

Gabriel was happy for his former colleagues. "That assuaged any guilt I might have felt," he's said. "Clearly they were off and away after a wobbly period. When I'd been the centre of the band everyone assumed that like Pete Townshend in The Who I'd been the main writer of everything, whereas I'd been just one of the main writers. When the band had more success without me, I suddenly felt that people were re-evaluating the old work, thinking, 'Oh, maybe Peter was just the guy who wore the masks', and that did piss me off! When I did write seriously again, I tried to come up with songs that sounded as different from Genesis as possible."

There were no masks for Collins, who didn't try to compete with Gabriel's on-stage theatricality, simply playing up his unpretentious guy-next-door persona. "Not a conscious decision," he says now. "I just didn't feel I could pull off the things Peter did. I said: 'Okay, I'll give it a go, but don't expect me to wear all those costumes!'" So he "just stood there and sang", afraid even to take the microphone off its stand at first. "Taking the microphone off its stand was what 'singers' did, I wasn't ready for that yet."

Yet as that night in Canada and many future nights (even during and after his phenomenal solo success) testified, he had a connection with Genesis' music and fans that was invaluable. "He was quite a character, but to the audience he was one of us, and, therefore, one of them," says Mike Rutherford now. "We knew after half an hour that night in Canada – this is going to work."

New Tricks

The exodus of Peter Gabriel could have spelled the end of **Genesis**. Instead, the band's songwriters stepped up, Phil Collins stepped into the limelight, and they delivered a true prog classic in *A Trick Of The Tail*.

Words: Mark Blake

Whatever happened to Mick Strickland? He was one of hundreds who applied for the job of lead singer in Genesis after Peter Gabriel left. Strickland even made it as far as Trident Studios and sang with the band, but it didn't work out.

Others who sent tapes to Genesis and waited for the call included Brinsley Schwarz's guitarist/vocalist-turned-punk producer Nick Lowe, Manfred Mann's Earth Band vocalist Mick Rogers and Jahn Teigen of Norwegian prog rockers Popol Ace, last seen receiving 'nul points' as a contestant in the 1978 Eurovision Song Contest.

However, on the 40th anniversary of *A Trick Of The Tail*, it's worth considering another possibility. "For a time, I thought we'd carry on as a four-piece without any singing," said Phil Collins.

Showing the same indomitable spirit that helped them survive an English public school education, Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks' response to Gabriel's departure was to put their heads down and simply carry on without him – until they couldn't carry on any more.

"We kept writing songs," Mike Rutherford told *Prog*, "but after a while we realised they'd get a bit boring without any vocals."

Soon enough Genesis began looking for a new lead singer. What nobody knew yet was that the band had already found him.

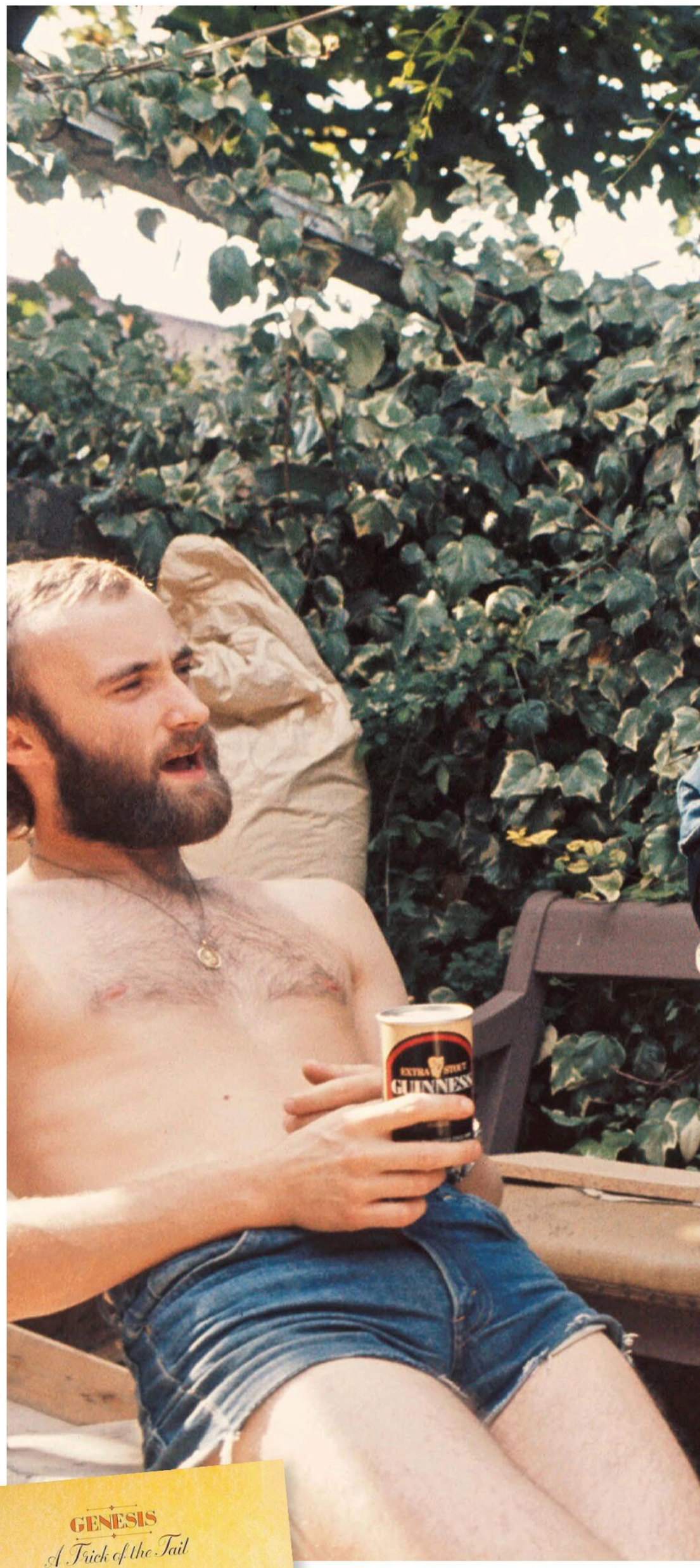
Peter Gabriel announced his exit at a band meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, in January 1975. Genesis were touring *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* at the time. Gabriel had already left during the album recording sessions but had been persuaded to return. This time he wouldn't change his mind. Gabriel's wife had recently given birth to their daughter, he was torn between family and band commitments, and also uneasy with what he called "the rock'n'roll culture" and being "part of the machinery".

Today, Rutherford is less surprised by Gabriel's departure than he was then: "He was moving forwards a bit braver and faster than we were." But at the time he was shocked and disappointed. After seven years together, Genesis were starting to make real headway, and some proper money.

Publicly, the band put a brave face on it all. "But there was a lot of fear about whether we could carry on without him," admitted Tony Banks.

Oddly, the one person who was convinced they could was Gabriel. "I had much more confidence in the band's ability to transcend my departure than they did," said their soon-to-be-ex-singer.

In a premonition of a future Genesis line-up, Steve Hackett was absent when Genesis started work on what would become *A Trick Of The Tail* in July '75. The guitarist was busy finishing his first solo album, *Voyage Of The Acolyte*. In the meantime, Rutherford, Collins and Banks began jamming in a rehearsal studio in Acton, West London. By the time Hackett turned up three days later, they'd written most of *Dance On A Volcano* and *Squonk*.



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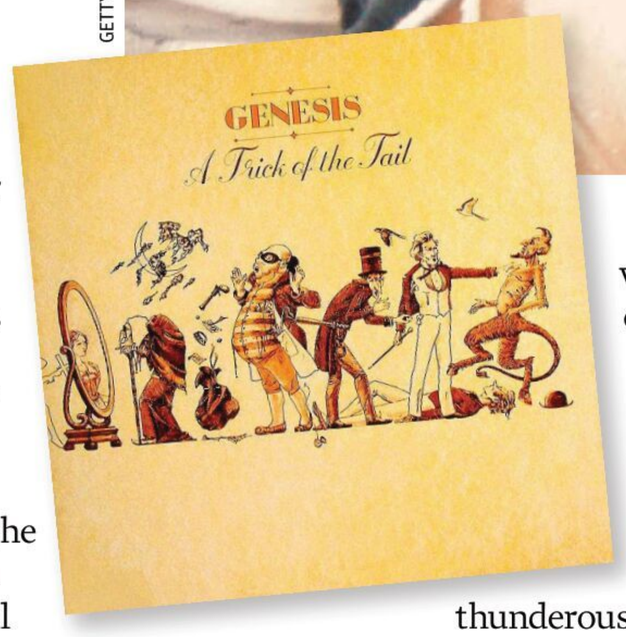


Dance On A Volcano was a doomy fanfare with echoes of Collins' beloved Santana and Weather Report in its busy rhythms. "It embodied all that Genesis did well," said Rutherford. Meanwhile, *Squonk* paired a thunderous drum figure with lyrics about a fictional beast taken from the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges' *Book Of Imaginary Beings*.

Led Zeppelin's *Physical Graffiti* had

Genesis relaxing in 1975 prior to writing *A Trick Of The Tail*.

come out earlier that year. Genesis had heard its signature song, *Kashmir*, on the radio in Germany and loved the huge drum sound. *Squonk* was "my John Bonham moment" said Collins, who still considers it one of his favourite songs on the album.

Genesis had kept the news of Gabriel's departure secret from the press. But after they placed an anonymous advert in *Melody Maker* seeking a singer "for a Genesis-style group", the news leaked out: "Gabriel Out Of Genesis!" announced the paper

> "We knew from the start costumes wouldn't be part of it. You only had to look at Phil to realise he wouldn't have been good in a flower mask."
>
> **Mike Rutherford**

on August 16. A week later, *MM* writer Chris Welch interviewed the group at their rehearsal studio and presented his subsequent article as an obituary. "No longer will Peter startle his fans with apparitions, kinetic structures and theatrical trickery of every description..." he wrote.

The announcement of Genesis' premature death made them even more determined to carry on. Before long, between 100 and 400 tapes (nobody can agree on a figure) had arrived at the Charisma Records office. Among

them were tapes from some "very well-known singers", recalled Tony Banks, though he's never revealed who.

Reports also vary as to how many vocalists made it to the audition stage. Banks says it was two or three a day for a time. Rutherford recalled the mysterious Mick Strickland having "the right bluesy voice" but struggling to master *Squonk*. "It was in completely the wrong key," Rutherford said. "The poor guy battled through it, but it was never going to work."

Ironically, it was Phil Collins who 'taught' the auditionees the songs beforehand. Collins had sung lead vocals on *Nursery Cryme*'s *For Absent Friends* and *More Fool Me* from *Selling England By The Pound*. His and Gabriel's voices had worked especially well together on *The Lamb...*, but at this point, nobody in Genesis regarded Collins as a potential lead singer.

Drummer Bill Bruford was rehearsing with Brand X and recalled Collins dropping by the studio and moaning about the auditions. "He said something like, 'They're all bloody useless — I can sing better than they can,'" said Bruford, who suggested Collins put himself forward for the job. Collins' wife Andrea, who'd known him since drama school and had seen him singing and playing drums, suggested the same.

Banks remembers Collins singing *Squonk* directly after Mick Strickland's audition. It worked. He sang another song. And then another. "Everybody was a little sceptical," Collins recalled. "But we started recording and we just knocked one song off after another...."

Sessions for *A Trick Of The Tail* began at Trident Studios in October '75, with new producer David Hentschel. "David had engineered *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* for Elton," says Collins now. "I got to know him through my dallying around and playing with other people, and suggested him to Genesis."

Recording *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* had been a tortuous affair. In contrast, *A Trick Of The Tail* took a little over a month. In some ways it was easier without Gabriel. He, Rutherford and Banks had always been Genesis' principal writers, with Steve Hackett chipping away on the sidelines. With Gabriel gone, there was one less potentially dissenting voice. The band now relished the opportunity to prove that Genesis had always been a songwriting collective, not just a vehicle for Peter Gabriel.

That said, *A Trick Of The Tail*'s unsung hero is Hackett, the co-writer of one of its finest moments, *Entangled*. "It was based on this really beautiful piece Steve had written," said Banks, who wrote the chorus and contributed an eerie synthesizer solo that suggested mythical sirens luring unsuspecting sailors onto the rocks. But when Hackett showed Collins his lyrics — *'Over the rooftops and houses... sentenced to drift far away now'* — he thought the song had "a *Mary Poppins* feel to it".

Collins was right. Even now, *Entangled* and parts of *Mad Man Moon* really do evoke childhood images of Disney's Mary Poppins gliding, umbrella in hand, over an autumnal landscape. In fact, most of *A Trick Of The Tail* has a dreamy, childlike atmosphere; certainly more so than *The Lamb...*, its predecessor. Heard again now, Banks and Rutherford's ballad *Ripples*, a song about old age and fading beauty, also pre-empts the uncomplicated love songs Genesis wrote in the 80s and 90s.

> "The day I started singing with Genesis changed my life." — **Phil Collins**

What the album shared with the Gabriel era, though, were what Banks called "story songs". Banks and Collins composed *Robbery, Assault And Battery*, on which Collins returned to his childhood theatre role as the cockney Artful Dodger to sing about a bungled burglary: *'You got it wrong sir/I'm only the clean-ah!'* But it now feels like a clunky companion piece to *Selling England By The Pound*'s *The Battle Of Epping Forest*. It's the only misstep on the whole album.

Far better was another 'story song': the title track. "It was something I'd written many years before," said Banks, "but with Peter's departure, I liked the idea of slipping in something lighter and more quirky."

Lyrically, *A Trick Of The Tail* partnered *Squonk*. This was Genesis back in the netherworld of elves and sprites, but with a cautionary message. Banks had been reading

Genesis, with guest drummer Bill Bruford (centre), in New York in March 1975.

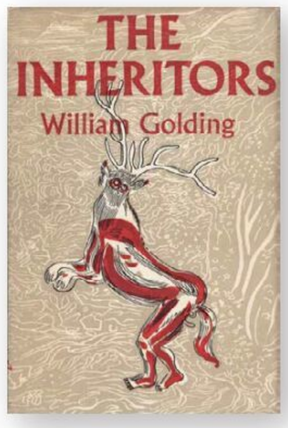
By 1977, Collins didn't have to rely on help from above...

GETTY IMAGES X2

William Golding's 1955 novel *The Inheritors*, which used the story of a Neanderthal tribe to comment on modern social mores. Genesis' tale of a 'beast that can talk' put on display in a public 'freakshow' had a social message, but also the album's most immediate melody and chorus. Banks later revealed that the song was partly inspired by The Beatles' *Getting Better*.

In contrast, the grand finale, *Los Endos*, picked up where *Dance On A Volcano* left off. It was the singing drummer's 'baby'; an instrumental showdown full of whirling-dervish drum patterns and tinkling Chinese cymbals. Today, Collins admits Santana's *Promise Of A Fisherman* inspired the whole piece: "I wanted to get all of that energy and melody in there."

By November, *A Trick Of The Tail* was complete. "I think we knew we'd made a good album," Rutherford told *Prog*. "It already felt like a new chapter."



William Golding's novel *The Inheritors* provided inspiration.

In keeping with the notion of a 'new' Genesis, the finished album also looked different. *A Trick Of The Tail* arrived in February 1976 in a sleeve that suggested the cover of a book of Victorian fairy tales. There was a masked felon, a hook-nosed judge, a withered old crone and a sobbing Squonk, all drawn by artist Colin Elgie on a faded yellow sleeve that resembled old parchment.

Tony Banks' assessment that "some of the public found Genesis with Peter a bit too strange" was borne out by the new album's sales. *A Trick Of The Tail* reached No.3 in the UK, tying with *Selling England By The Pound* as Genesis' highest-charting LP yet. "We had to prove we could do it without Peter," Banks told *Melody Maker*, before adding boldly, "We think it's the best album we've ever done."

But Genesis now faced the challenge of how to perform the album live. Unlike part-time singing drummers such as 10cc's Kevin Godley, Collins was Genesis' only lead singer.

The early signs weren't encouraging. Gabriel had 'sold' Genesis live, dressed as a fox, a flower and, on *The Lamb...* tour, a giant rubber penis. Genesis filmed a video for the *A Trick Of The Tail* single that only highlighted how different, how ordinary, their new singer was. Collins in his winter scarf and quirky orange hat looked like a hippie window cleaner moonlighting from his day job. "We knew from the start costumes wouldn't be part of it," admitted Rutherford. "You only had to look at Phil to realise he wouldn't have been good in a flower mask."

The solution was to let Collins just be himself, and to find a second drummer for the tour. Collins recruited his Brand X sparring partner, Bill Bruford. Interviewed in *Sounds* ahead of the opening dates, Bruford damned his new employers with faint praise: "I'd never seen Genesis or heard their albums before. But I respected Phil and knew he wouldn't be involved in any rubbish." Thanks Bill.

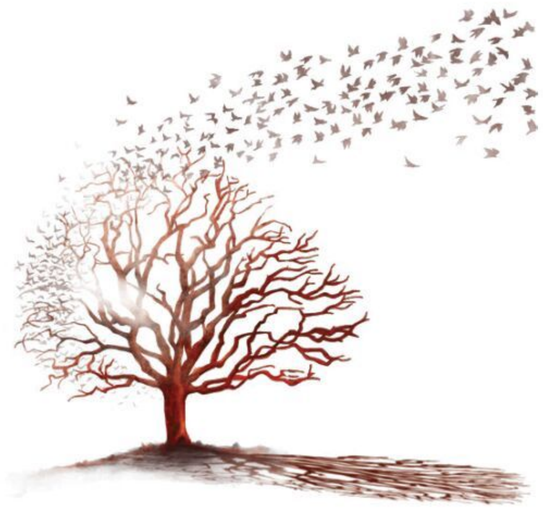
Today Phil Collins admits, "The day I started singing with Genesis changed my life." It was March 27, 1976, at the Kitchener Auditorium, Ontario, Canada, when Collins first walked on stage as Genesis' lead singer. His hands were shaking and he was clutching a piece of paper with notes of what to say to the audience. But without any lavish props or costumes to hide behind, Collins engaged the crowd with his directness, his down-to-earth humour and his unerring ability to sound like Peter Gabriel when he sang the 'old stuff'.

"People didn't want to give up on Genesis," said Collins. "They wanted us to stay together, so they backed me up."

As the tour progressed, Collins grew into his role. In June '76, Peter Gabriel slipped quietly into the Hammersmith Odeon to watch the new band. "It was a very strange experience and I had mixed emotions," he admitted.

Mike Rutherford's comment about Phil Collins in the 70s, "When Phil had an idea, you listened..." would become even more significant in the years ahead. When Genesis went back into the studio to record the album's follow-up, *Wind & Wuthering*, and after Steve Hackett's departure, *...And Then There Were Three...*, the band's dynamic had changed forever.

On its 40th anniversary, *A Trick Of The Tail*, with its charming cast of mythical beasts, 'mesmerised children' and 'snowflakes in June' is both a last hurrah for the 'old' Genesis and the beginning of something entirely new. Neither Genesis nor Phil Collins would ever be quite the same again.



Lost in the Afterglow

It was the album that one writer claimed made Yes and Pink Floyd redundant. In the midst of the rage of punk rock, the four-piece **Genesis** set about making one of their best-loved and proggiest albums ever. Tony Banks, Steve Hackett, Mike Rutherford and co-producer David Hentschel recall making the band's last bold prog statement...

Words: Daryl Easlea

In December 1976, 16 days after the Sex Pistols appeared on the *Today* programme and shocked the nation, taking punk rock overground, Genesis released their eighth studio album, *Wind & Wuthering*. History suggests that the music media rounded on them: quickly, the Home Counties four-piece, the very epitome of progressive rock, couldn't get arrested. Or so one thinks. In fact, *Wind & Wuthering* was, in the main, rapturously received, and led to some of the most over-subscribed concerts in the group's history. The immediate indifference to the album is one of the many myths that has grown up around it. Another is that tensions in the studio were high, which led to guitarist Steve Hackett's departure.

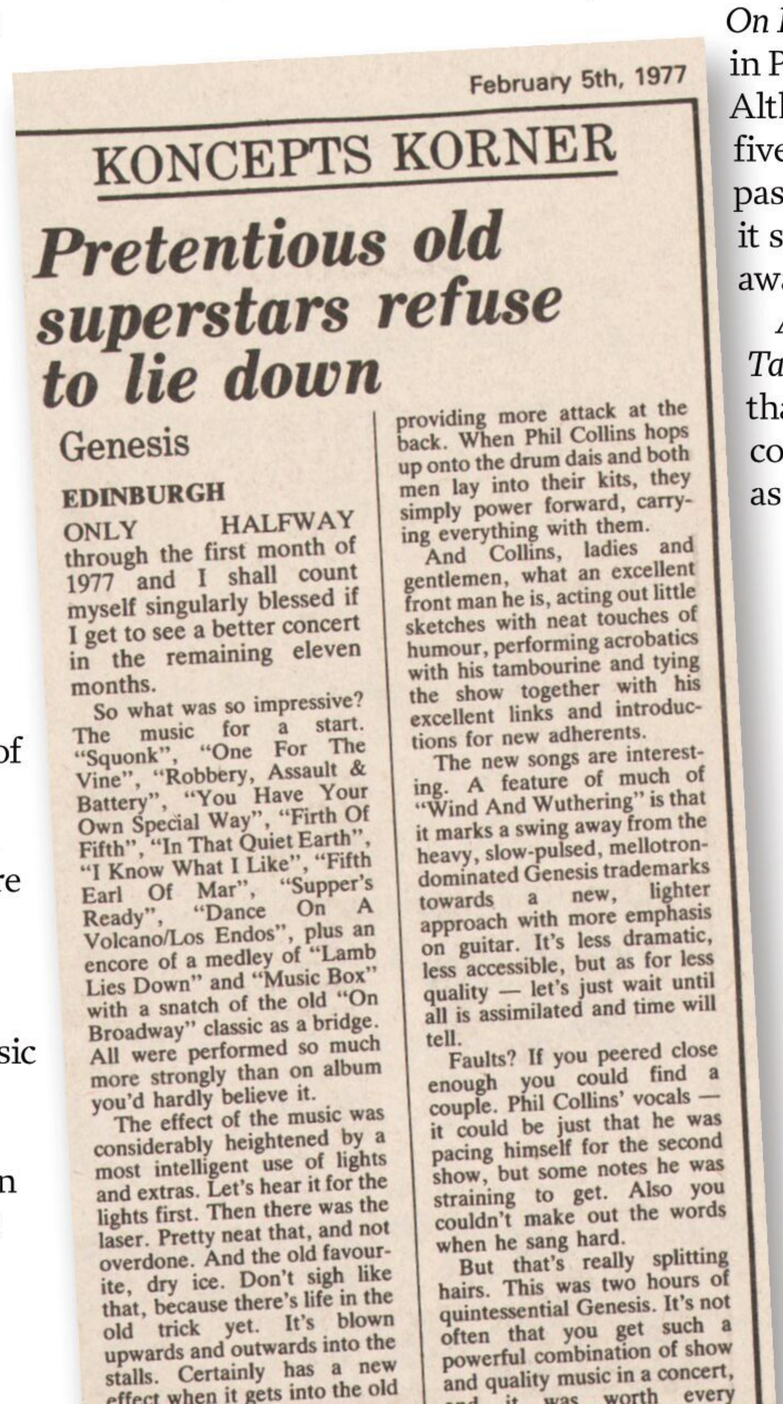
Wind & Wuthering, for this listener, is the group's lushest, most detailed work. It's an album of excitement, restraint, melancholy and possibility. Exceptionally well produced, it was the moment where the two 'junior partners' of the quartet (Hackett and drummer/vocalist Phil Collins) stepped forward: Collins arranging the music and providing not only the wild fusion of *Wot Gorilla*, but also the chorus to *Blood On The Rooftops*, on which Hackett provided the music and lyrics. It's possibly one of the greatest and most overlooked songs in the entire Genesis canon.

Wind & Wuthering can be viewed as Genesis' last truly prog gasp: a beautiful work that has a flavour all of its own and sits as singularly in the Collins years as *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* does in Peter Gabriel's. Although less than five years had passed since *Foxtrot*, it seemed a world away from that time.

A Trick Of The Tail had proved that the group could be a success as a four-piece and were not, as many thought, simply Gabriel's backing band. With *Wind & Wuthering*, the group looked to build on that achievement and, as most of their material had been used up (and Hackett had used his on his solo *Voyage Of The Acolyte*), the band began writing in earnest after the tour to support *A Trick Of The Tail* ended in July 1976.

There were challenges the band had to face: co-founder and bassist/guitarist Mike Rutherford feels *Wind & Wuthering* suffered because the album before had been key to the band's survival. "*A Trick Of The Tail* was so important, while with this, I think we slightly coasted. *A Trick*... really achieved stuff for us: first time writing without Peter. The one after is always going to be a little bit harder."

Below: even *NME* loved *Wind & Wuthering* in the year of punk... but still couldn't resist a snarky headline.



February 5th, 1977

KONCEPTS KORNER

Pretentious old superstars refuse to lie down

Genesis

EDINBURGH

ONLY HALFWAY through the first month of 1977 and I shall count myself singularly blessed if I get to see a better concert in the remaining eleven months.

So what was so impressive? The music for a start. "Squonk", "One For The Vine", "Robbery, Assault & Battery", "You Have Your Own Special Way", "Firth Of Fifth", "In That Quiet Earth", "I Know What I Like", "Fifth Earl Of Mar", "Supper's Ready", "Dance On A Volcano/Los Endos", plus an encore of a medley of "Lamb Lies Down" and "Music Box" with a snatch of the old "On Broadway" classic as a bridge. All were performed so much more strongly than on album you'd hardly believe it.

The effect of the music was considerably heightened by a most intelligent use of lights and extras. Let's hear it for the lights first. Then there was the laser. Pretty neat that, and not overdone. And the old favourite, dry ice. Don't sigh like that, because there's life in the old trick yet. It's blown upwards and outwards into the stalls. Certainly has a new effect when it gets into the old

providing more attack at the back. When Phil Collins hops up onto the drum dais and both men lay into their kits, they simply power forward, carrying everything with them.

And Collins, ladies and gentlemen, what an excellent front man he is, acting out little sketches with neat touches of humour, performing acrobatics with his tambourine and tying the show together with his excellent links and introductions for new adherents.

The new songs are interesting. A feature of much of "Wind And Wuthering" is that it marks a swing away from the heavy, slow-pulsed, mellotron-dominated Genesis trademarks towards a new, lighter approach with more emphasis on guitar. It's less dramatic, less accessible, but as for less quality — let's just wait until all is assimilated and time will tell.

Faults? If you peered close enough you could find a couple. Phil Collins' vocals — it could be just that he was pacing himself for the second show, but some notes he was straining to get. Also you couldn't make out the words when he sang hard.

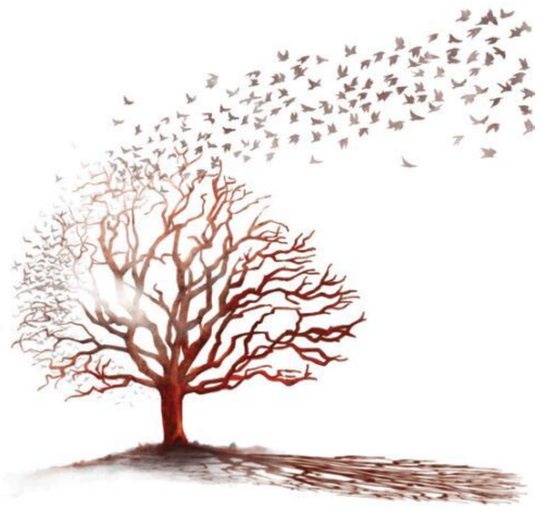
But that's really splitting hairs. This was two hours of quintessential Genesis. It's not often that you get such a powerful combination of show and quality music in a concert, and it was worth every

PRESS CUTTING: THE GENESIS ARCHIVE

> "We got a lot of stick from the usual suspects, the *NME*s and everybody who kind of didn't want this music around. Fashions changed but we sort of managed to keep going."
>
> **Tony Banks**

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Quintessentially English: the four-piece Genesis.



Hackett was having trouble deciding the direction in which he would like his career to develop: "Having done my first album, I thought I wasn't really dependent on composition by committee. But on the other hand, I wasn't running a solo career."

Co-founder and keyboard player Tony Banks, however, thought it was a strong time for the group. "It was the time when Steve emerged as being more of an equal contributor to the group than he had been prior to that."

After an intensive period of writing and rehearsing in the scorching British summer of 1976, Genesis decamped to Relight Studios in Hilvarenbeek, Holland for two weeks that September to record. With them was *A Trick Of The Tail*'s co-producer David Hentschel, who had first worked with Genesis when he was an engineer at Trident while they were recording *Nursery Cryme* in 1971.

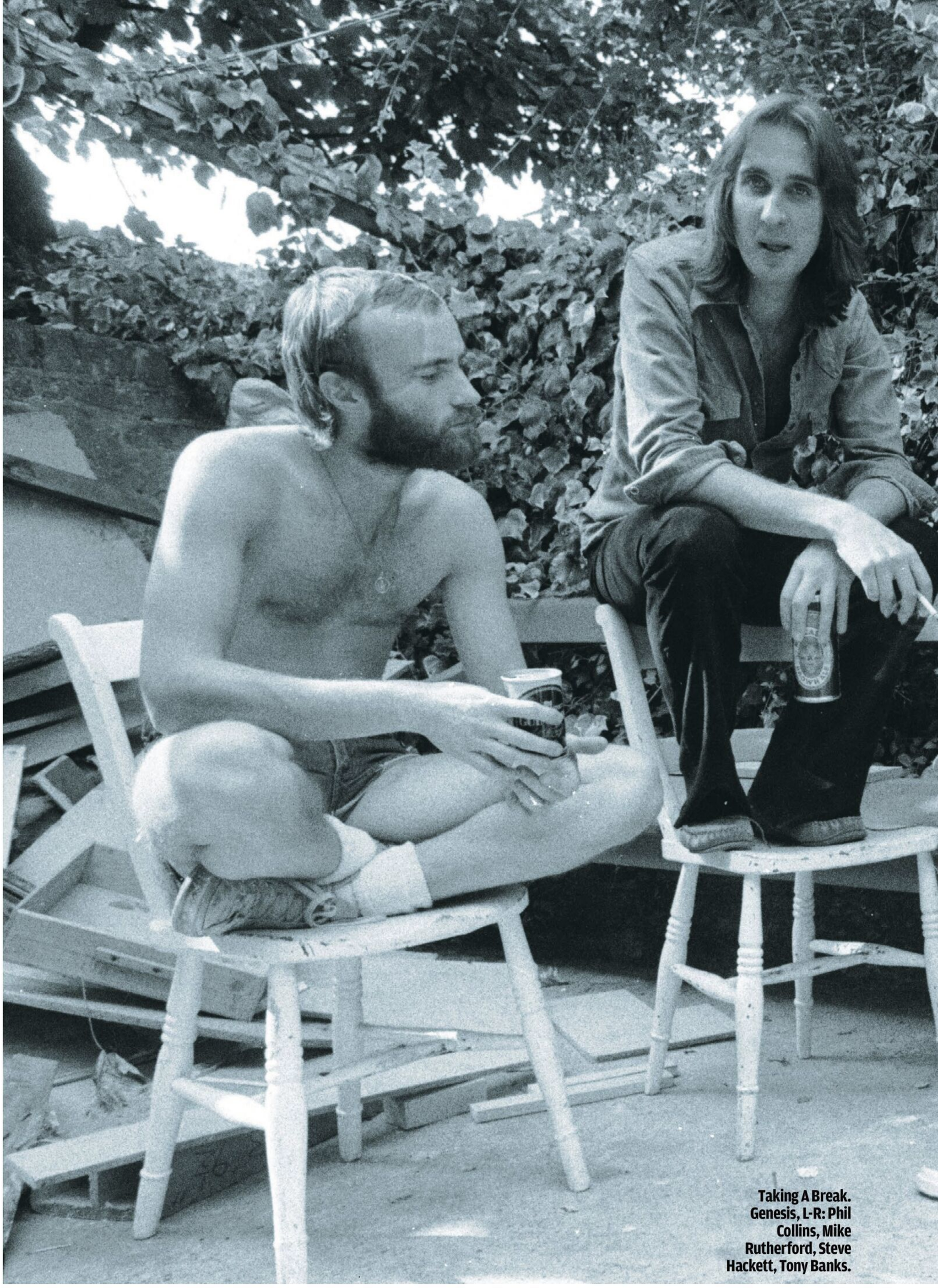
"They had very thorough rehearsals before every album for about a month," Hentschel says. "Tony was, I suppose, the lead writer. They used to approach the whole thing in a very democratic way. They'd get to the rehearsal room and everyone would bring ideas and things they'd been working on and they'd pool their ideas, play through them and each song would develop."

The studio was remote and the concentration was intense. "Being in the Dutch wilderness was a great thing," Rutherford says. "We were in the wildest part of Holland with nothing going on out there. You really do get in the zone: stay somewhere and focus on nothing else, dawn to dusk, no interference from the outside world. It was very important actually; it would be hard to happen now."

"We stayed in this little house," Collins said in '84. "All boys together."

Hentschel states, "It was next to a pig farm so it was a fairly rural and fragrant environment in which to have your breakfast! We were all living together for two weeks. It was just us and the road crew. We'd eat at the studio every night, have stuff sent in. It was totally cut off but that enabled us to concentrate. By the time we went into the studio, there was very little to do. Pretty much all of them [the songs] worked straight away – third or fourth take and it was done."

There was an ease to the recording as the producer and his charges had worked together before. "We had a shorthand we used to use for getting different sounds," Hentschel says. "For example: the bass needs a bit more 'ponk'. With Phil, he always wanted 'job' on his vocal, which were short digital delays I used to use in a specific setting with a particular kind of reverb. This shorthand made communication really easy."



Taking A Break. Genesis, L-R: Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford, Steve Hackett, Tony Banks.

> "You can understand that frustration, that Steve wasn't getting enough of his ideas accepted by the band. But I was totally unaware of it at the time."
>
> **David Hentschel**

The album is full of memorable moments: Scottish history lesson *Eleventh Earl Of Mar* is one the group's strongest openers. "I wrote those strange chords and thought it would make a great introduction," Banks says. "It had an atmosphere about it which sets up the whole thing – Steve had the chorus and the chords, Mike then wrote most of the lyrics for it."

"*Eleventh Earl Of Mar* had a tremendous energy," Rutherford says. "It was always good on stage. I was in Edinburgh last week. As a tourist, you

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

realise just how much bloodshed there has been in their history."

An energetic blend of time signatures, it falls away to a bucolic instrumental passage, with Hackett playing kalimba. "Steve wrote that middle part on its own — he had this lyric going for it which made it through to the end," Banks says.

The song would frequently open the set on their forthcoming tour.

The tale of false prophets, *One For The Vine*, written solely by Banks, was a more conventional track, evoking memories of work as far back as *Trespass*. "It works very well," Hackett says.

"I've always liked writing music that doesn't go where you think it will," Banks adds. "Key changes and chords that you are not expecting in pop songs, without trying to make it too awkward. I'm a big fan of Brian Wilson who has always been able to use strange harmonies without realising he's doing it."

The song was written over a period of months in 1976, and Banks relished

Make Your Day: a promo for *Your Own Special Way* in *Record Mirror*.

Treemendous Design

More so than any other Genesis sleeve, *Wind & Wuthering*'s artwork encapsulates the music inside. Illustrator **Colin Elgie** tells *Prog* how it came about...

"After my degree at East Ham Technical College, I went to work with Storm [Thorgerson] and Po [Aubrey Powell] at Hipgnosis, who were branching out into illustration. It was a golden age as suddenly, you had Sunday supplements and people around like Alan Aldridge.

Before I worked with Genesis, among other things, I'd illustrated *Distant Light* for The Hollies and contributed to Pink Floyd's *A Nice Pair*. I drew a Japanese Samurai elevated off the ground – it was, of course, 'a nip in the air'. It's like a Benny Hill joke – crazy when you look back at it. You couldn't get away from a pun in that era.

I was dropping artwork off at Hipgnosis' studio in Denmark Street when they were doing *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* for Genesis. I remember them setting up the shot with the guy jumping through the plate glass window. *A Trick Of The Tail* was the first project I did with the group. I didn't know that much about them, so didn't have a lot of baggage. I knew Peter Gabriel had left and they'd done the Betty Swanwick cover [for *Selling England By The Pound*], which was more like my stuff.

There was no music to listen to, but we had typed-out lyrics – very low-tech. Storm had suggested that I illustrate the characters as if from a play. I loved the Victorian engraving style, and the characters seem to suit that approach. I got some old parchment and did the artworks separately and dropped them in on the background. I hand-lettered the Genesis logo that was used on that and *Wind & Wuthering*. I knew they liked it as I did a whole bunch of stationery for them based on the imagery from *A Trick Of The Tail*.

It was a really open brief for the next one. Storm told me to come up with some ideas, and that it was to be called *Wind & Wuthering*. I thought it was a great, visual title. Images immediately sprang to mind – Heathcliff, the moors. Around that time, I'd seen a movie on TV called *The War Lord* with Charlton Heston. Set in medieval England and northern France, it had a scene in it where Heston is by a tree and the birds in it take flight: that's where the idea came from. I didn't have a still from the film, it was just from memory.

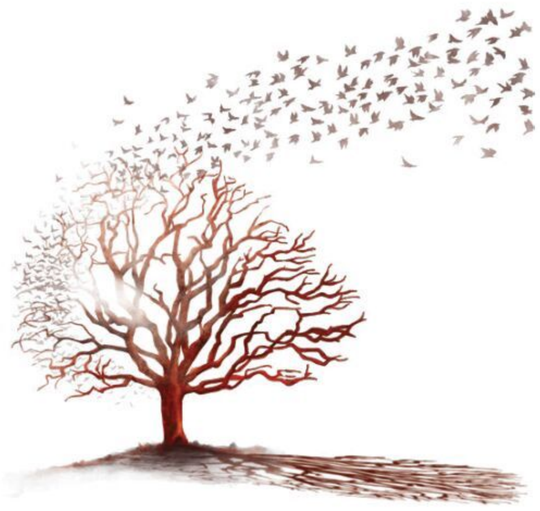
The watercolour took about two or three weeks to complete. I wish I'd done it better: maybe with a hint more colour, less monochromatic. I didn't meet the band in person, although I did meet Mike Rutherford later as I worked on his solo album, *Smallcreep's Day*.

It's funny, as my idea came from a movie, someone told me about Peter Jackson's *The Lovely Bones*. There's a scene in it where the main actor sees a tree that looks so much like the album cover. The tree erupts with the birds.

So much work went into the packaging then. I thought the music would carry on, but I didn't realise *quite* how iconic it would be. It seemed a young man's game at the time." **DE**

PRESS CUTTINGS: THE GENESIS ARCHIVE

GENESIS WIND AND WUTHERING 1976 COVER DESIGN: HIPGNOSIS/C. ELGIE ILLUSTRATION: C. ELGIE © 2017 HIPGNOSIS LTD



the opportunity to splice sections together that were only heard once or infrequently. "I love that," he says. "We were trying to tell a story and never quite go back, only to that main starting point. I liked the cyclical nature of the story: the person in the end becomes the prophet he didn't believe in and becomes disillusioned."

However, for all the strangeness of *One For The Vine*, a new commercialism was starting to appear on the following *Your Own Special Way*, which gave the band "the start of a tickle in America", as writer Rutherford notes – it was the first tentative opening of the floodgates for Genesis' appearance on American radio, and began the spadework that ended with their US chart dominance in their *Invisible Touch* era a decade later.

"*Your Own Special Way*, not just because I wrote it, kind of worked," Rutherford says. "It was written in a funny tuning, and I had no idea what it was – an open tuning that later eluded me that made the chords easy to play."

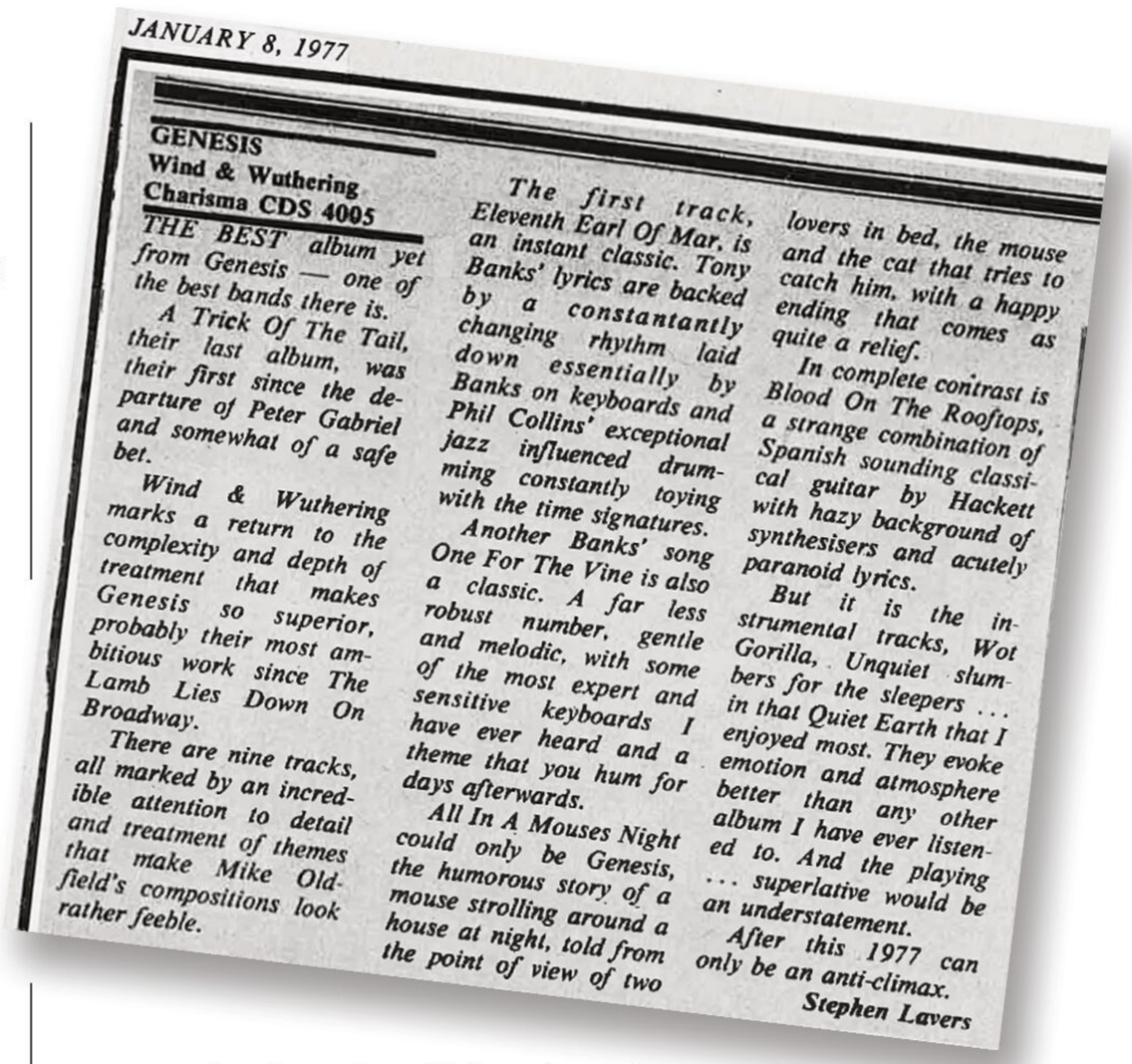
"*Your Own Special Way* is not my favourite song," Banks says. "I quite like the verse, it's alright, but I think we've written better love songs. It was a curious combination – Mike had this second other bit, which ended up being played on a Rhodes, and we joined the two together. It has a lovely lilt about it; a little bit more conventional."

After the conventional, it's off to wild jazz fusion land. *Wot Gorilla* has often been seen as 'Exhibit A' for Hackett's decision to leave the group the following year, especially as this was the song that took the place of his *Please Don't Touch*. "A very inferior instrumental," he said in 1984. "A real doodle of an idea."

In Collins' recent autobiography, *Not Dead Yet*, he says he had to "push for the Weather Report groove on *Wot Gorilla*, with Tony and me sharing writing credits. But it's during these sessions that Steve starts to feel the pinch as a writer".

"*Wot Gorilla* was good rhythmically, but underdeveloped harmonically," Hackett says in 2017. "Dispassionately, I think *Please Don't Touch* has both rhythm *and* harmonic development, which is more exciting."

> "I'm a big fan of Brian Wilson, who has always been able to use strange harmonies without realising he's doing it."
>
> **Tony Banks**



JANUARY 8, 1977

GENESIS
Wind & Wuthering
Charisma CDS 4005

THE BEST album yet from Genesis — one of the best bands there is.

A Trick Of The Tail, their last album, was their first since the departure of Peter Gabriel and somewhat of a safe bet.

Wind & Wuthering marks a return to the complexity and depth of treatment that makes Genesis so superior, probably their most ambitious work since The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway.

There are nine tracks, all marked by an incredible attention to detail and treatment of themes that make Mike Oldfield's compositions look rather feeble.

The first track, Eleventh Earl Of Mar, is an instant classic. Tony Banks' lyrics are backed by a constantly changing rhythm laid down essentially by Banks on keyboards and Phil Collins' exceptional jazz influenced drumming constantly toying with the time signatures.

Another Banks' song One For The Vine is also a classic. A far less robust number, gentle and melodic, with some of the most expert and sensitive keyboards I have ever heard and a theme that you hum for days afterwards.

All In A Mouses Night could only be Genesis, the humorous story of a mouse strolling around a house at night, told from the point of view of two lovers in bed, the mouse and the cat that tries to catch him, with a happy ending that comes as quite a relief.

In complete contrast is Blood On The Rooftops, a strange combination of Spanish sounding classical guitar by Hackett with hazy background of synthesisers and acutely paranoid lyrics.

But it is the instrumental tracks, Wot Gorilla, Unquiet slumbers for the sleepers ... in that Quiet Earth that I enjoyed most. They evoke emotion and atmosphere better than any other album I have ever listened to. And the playing ... superlative would be an understatement.

After this 1977 can only be an anti-climax.

Stephen Lavers

1977 wasn't all punk: *National RockStar*'s glowing Genesis review.

If there *is* a misstep on *Wind & Wuthering*, it's side two's opening cat-and-mouse melodrama, *All In A Mouse's Night*. "I don't feel it's my most successful track," says its composer, Tony Banks. "The riffs were good, but the lyric was a little self-conscious. I don't think it's bad, it's just not up there with my other two. It has that humorous element in it, in contrast to some of the heavyweight tracks elsewhere on the album. It's important in that sense."

One of the album's understated highlights follows. *Blood On The Rooftops*, written by Hackett and Collins, is a brooding, grey piece, which "someone who's wrongfully imprisoned and so, like *Blood On The Rooftops*, there's an aspect of social comment", he says.

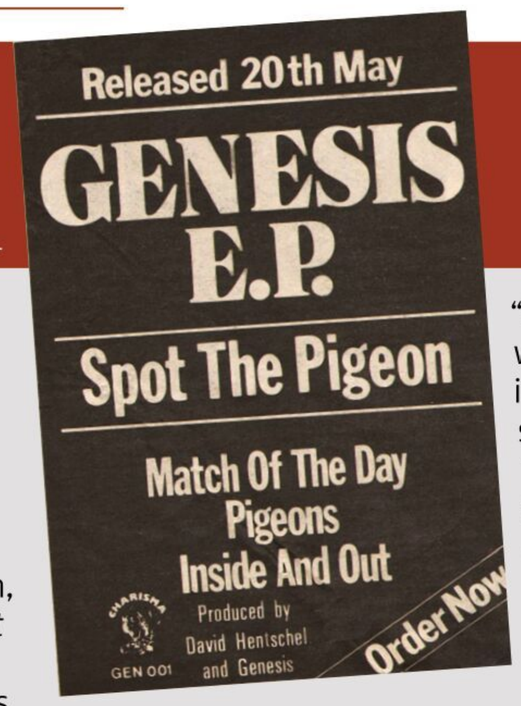
The first part (*Inside*) talks about the protagonist's conviction. The second (*Out*) is a wild-blowing jam to symbolise their freedom. Banks liked it too, and it was played on the band's 1977 tour.

"The first part, I think, is a better song than *Your Own Special Way*, and the second is an exciting piece of music. Both Steve and I were going quite eccentric with the solos."

Spot The Pigeon reached No.14 in the UK chart, setting Genesis up for their Top 10 placing the following year with *Follow You, Follow Me*, yet none of the tracks have ever made it to any of their hits compilations. **DE**

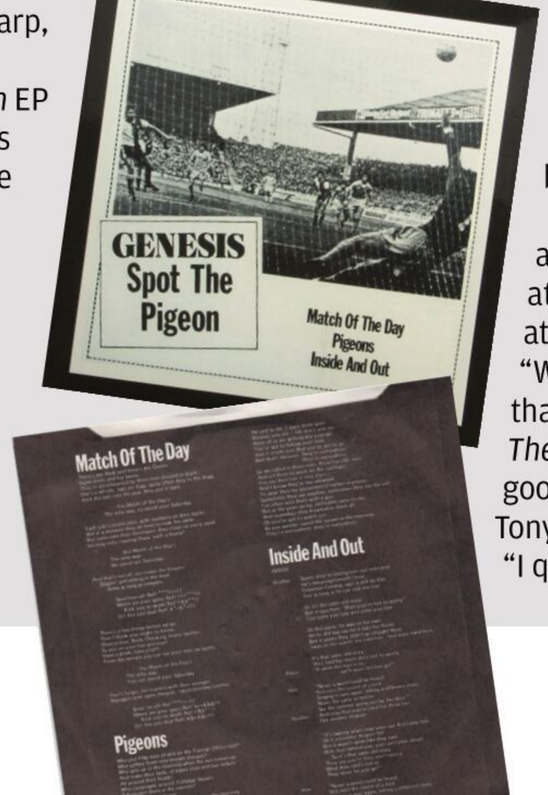
Pigeon Droppings?

Genesis' three-track *Spot The Pigeon* EP gave the band their first Top 20 UK singles chart hit, but you won't find its songs on a greatest hits set...



In May 1977, just in time for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, there was a three-track new release with a song that incited kicking a football referee 'to death', a number that contained a four-letter word in its opening lines, and finally, a track alluding to sexual assault. But this wasn't one of those newfangled punk waxings. It was by none other than Genesis, who seemed to have followed their most autumnal album with a short, sharp, aggressive spring.

The *Spot The Pigeon* EP marked Steve Hackett's final studio appearance with the group, and was comprised of the three tracks recorded with David Hentschel at Relight Studios that did not fit with the melancholy sweep of their parent album. The EP is a problematic release in the Genesis catalogue: despite giving them their first Top 20 UK singles chart hit, it's often entirely disregarded. That is, of course, largely due to its lead track *Match Of The Day*, a slice of terrace commentary from a band more associated with croquet than soccer. However, despite the band's dislike of the track, and its at times cringeworthy lyrics, it's a fabulous time capsule of what Association Football used to be like in the UK.



It came with a video filmed at QPR's ground at Loftus Road. "We never felt that *Match Of The Day* was very good, any of us," Tony Banks sighs. "I quite like the riff in the middle, but the rest I could really live without."

The simple, shuffling *Pigeons* that completes the first side is also anachronistic. It opens by positing the question, *'Who put 50 tons of shit on the foreign office roof?'* Mike Rutherford's lyrics could be read as an allegory about punks (the pigeons) moving in and the old guard (the civil servants) trying to defend their ground. "It was a lot of fun as it was so different," Banks says. "The idea of doing a whole song around one note was something that I had wanted to do for a long time, changing the chords underneath it."

The single's flipside was rooted in more conventional territory: *Inside And Out* is the most serious contender for the track that should have been on *Wind & Wuthering*. With lyrics by Hackett, it concerns

GENESIS "WIND & WUTHERING" THE NEW ALBUM
CDS 4005
ON CHARISMA RECORDS & TAPES
Co-produced by GENESIS and DAVID HENTSCHEL
WIND & WUTHERING

GENESIS: 'Wind & Wuthering' (Charisma CDS 4005*****

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Too much to digest on one listening. Overall album sound even better than 'A Trick Of The Tail'. Less immediate but more substantial than previous album. More aggressive than melodic. Best recorded Phil Collins vocals to date. Heavier jazz influence — could this have anything to do with Brand X????? Sounds great. Spin it again.

SECOND IMPRESSIONS: Probably the most ambitious album Genesis have attempted sine 'The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway'. After several listenings it becomes apparent that Genesis are undoubtedly the best 'Progressive' rock 'n' roll band in the land. This time around complex arrangements are stuffed with sophisticated themes and advanced playing. The band now seem relaxed and confident to be themselves. Where 'A Trick Of The Tail' was instantly accessible but slightly safe, 'Wind And Wuthering' is an adventurous gamble that handsomely pays off. Spit it again.

THIRD IMPRESSIONS: 'Eleventh Earl Of Mar' already a Genesis classic, built around several intriguing time changes allowing Collins the freedom to experiment with odd-beat percussive parts and various infectious vocals. Highly reminiscent of previous Genesis fairly tales with concrete musical climaxes that are unquestionably exhilarating. Stop and catch breath. The band play on . . . .

FOURTH IMPRESSIONS: 'Eleventh Earl Of Mar' even better now but 'One For The Vine' written by Tony Banks looks like the ONE. It begins slowly, craftfully, creating a gentle, surreal mood before exploding with one of those tempo changes that have you on the edge of your seat like the 7/8 bits of 'Supper's Ready'. Outdoes 'Willow Farm'. Long melodic passages beautifully done with lovely guitars and piano before the tune erupts into a majestic rock 'n' roll march. Oh to hear this live . . .

FIFTH IMPRESSIONS: The instrumental that closes side one, 'Wot Gorilla?' finally makes musical sense. Mike Rutherford's beautiful love song 'Your Own Special Way' works on the subconscious. Suddenly you find yourself singing it in the loo, in the kitchen, in the car . . . Could even perhaps be a hit single. Side one now neatly falls into place.

SIXTH IMPRESSIONS: Side two presents problems but these are eventually surmounted. Banks scores heavily again with 'All In A Mouses's Night', a rollicking tale of comical fear about sleepless nights due to a roaming mouse in the house. Only Genesis could write a song where the mouse gets to tell his side of the story too. Another gentle slice of melody, 'Blood On The Rooftops', penned by Steve Hackett and Phil Collins, contains excellent, imaginative words surrounded by a contagious theme. But what about the major instrumental????

SEVENTH IMPRESSIONS: Now positive 'One For The Vine' is Genesis' finest moment. Sneaking suspicion 'Wind And Wuthering' is their best album. Can't stop playing the damn thing. Even miss 'Starsky And Hutch'. Instrumental 'Unquiet slumbers for sleepers . . . in that quiet earth' begins to take shape, making sense 'Afterglow' is definitely a soothing send off. Quiet slumbers await you. Sleep an impossibility because you find yourself playing this album again and again and . . .

EIGHTH IMPRESSIONS: Instrumental finally snaps into place. Genesis prove with this piece that they are expert musicians, gifted with the ability to experiment without being self indulgent. A rare thing in rock 'n roll these days. Hackett contributes large chunks of aggressive playing that makes ya wanna rock 'n roll. Still in love with 'One For The Vine'

FINAL COMMENTS: Tony Banks is a great acoustic piano player and a fine songwriter. Genesis make Yes redundant. And The Pink Floyd too. Don't listen to me, hear it for yourself. It's addictive stuff. Just smell the heather Heathcliffe . . . — BARBARA CHARONE

GENESIS (from left): Steve Hackett, Tony Banks, Chester Thompson, Mike Rutherford, Phil Collins

Wuthering heights

Above: praise for *Wind & Wuthering* from *Sounds* in 1976.

Right: a press advert announcing the new album's release.

returns to the social comment of some of Peter Gabriel's lyrics. While Gabriel bemoaned the state of the nation as Britannia in 1973's *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight* from *Selling England By The Pound*, here the protagonist is anaesthetised from world issues and political debates by the lure of cheap television and frequent cups of tea.

"*Blood On The Rooftops* has always been one of my favourite Genesis tracks," Banks says.

Rutherford agrees: "It was great. Steve and Phil was a nice combination, it really worked. And you can see Phil starting to get a handle on melodies."

Hackett brought in nylon guitars, offering an update on the group's traditional 12-string sound. "The nylon guitar on *Blood On The Rooftops* is just stunning," Hentschel says. "The way it blends with the whole band as it develops is wonderful."

"It sets the song up and it's very personal," Hackett adds. "There's an aspect of classical, which establishes the scene for something stark. I wrote the lyrics, Phil came up with the title of the song and the chorus. I was thinking of Jimmy Webb and some of his more unlikely melodies."

"I had a lot of fun with the arrangement," Banks continues. "I was trying to make it into an enormous orchestrated piece using the mellotron. The combination of everything works really well."

Wind & Wuthering builds to its climax with *Unquiet Slumbers For The Sleepers...* and *...In That Quiet Earth*. "I always loved *Unquiet Slumbers...*, which was especially great on stage," Rutherford says.

"I'd always wanted to use an ellipsis in a song title!" Banks laughs. "I was flicking through *Wuthering Heights*, saw the last two lines and thought 'unquiet slumbers' would work well with the softer part. *In That Quiet Earth* sounds as if it will be a gentle piece, but ends as very attacking."

"It was very good," Hackett adds. "You had the fast and the slow — the compelling slow rhythm, setting up all those marching band aspects. You have the implied army coming at you."

As the piece rises to its crescendo, it blends into the album's most powerful song, one that was to remain in the group's live set: *Afterglow*.

"*Afterglow* is simple but still has elements of that splendour prog rock has," its writer, Tony Banks, says. "I wrote it almost in the time it took to play it. It's about a reaction to a disaster and the realisation of what's important to you, in a slightly cataclysmic way. As I was writing the melody, I wrote that first verse and made the chorus the essence of what the person is actually thinking."

> "*Wind & Wuthering* was four young guys and all their attendant capabilities at the time, and technological limitations. It's magic for the converted listener."
>
> **Steve Hackett**

With Collins' sampled massed vocals at the end (inspired by 10cc's *I'm Not In Love*), it's a thoroughly moving ending, providing an emotional finale to what Banks has referred to in the past as a "heavy" album.

Wind & Wuthering will forever be associated with the tensions over writing credits for Steve Hackett that would ultimately lead to his departure from the band. Of course, this couldn't be seen by the untrained eye.

"You can understand that frustration, that he wasn't getting enough of his ideas accepted by the band," Hentschel says, "but I was totally unaware of it at the time. They were totally professional and got stuck in to it. Steve was a little quiet, maybe. But there were no words in the studio or funny looks or anything like that that I noticed."

As well as *Please Don't Touch*, Hackett had considered offering them the song which was to become *Hoping Love Will Last*. The band didn't seem particularly interested. "*Wind & Wuthering* marked the beginning of the end for Steve," Phil Collins said in 2006. "Especially his angst about how much material he had on it."

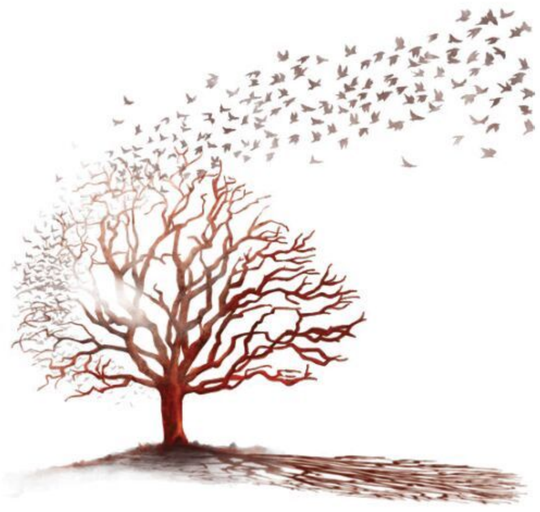
After final mixing and overdubbing was completed at Trident, *Wind & Wuthering* was released on Charisma just before Christmas in 1976. And contrary to popular opinion, it wasn't shredded apart by journalists. Their main supporters in the UK, *Sounds* and *Melody Maker*, were fulsome in their praise.

Barbara Charone opened her review in *Sounds* by saying: "First impressions: too much to digest on one listening. Overall album sound even better than *A Trick Of The Tail*. Less immediate but more substantial than previous album. More aggressive than melodic."

She concluded her review with the strong praise: "Genesis make Yes redundant. And the Pink Floyd too. Don't listen to me, hear it for yourself. It's addictive stuff. Just smell the heather Heathcliff..."

Long-term champion Chris Welch said in *Melody Maker*: "Rock can still have some vestige of pride left in itself when musicians like these are still working, unaffected by the clamorous pursuit of trivia elsewhere."

If punk *had* caused such a seismic revolution, it had little effect on



Genesis. "It was like shaking the apple tree," Rutherford said in 2006. "The good ones stayed and the bad ones came down."

"I thought, 'They're not talking about *us*,'" Phil Collins added. "They're talking about those other bands that I don't like either."

"We got a lot of stick from the usual suspects, the *NME*s and everybody who kind of didn't want this music around," Banks laughs. "Fashions changed but we sort of managed to keep going. This album was uncompromising and that was good."

Genesis launched their world tour on New Year's Day, 1977, with three sold-out shows at London's Rainbow Theatre. They were the first to introduce Chester Thompson, the former Weather Report/Frank Zappa drummer into their live equation. For these shows, there were allegedly 60,000 applications for 6,000 tickets.

"Oh we loved those sort of things," Banks laughs. "God knows if they're true. They still get printed, don't they?"

Although going back to the scene of their 1973 triumph with their former singer didn't hold a great deal of significance for Banks, he admits, "We were pretty nervous at that point. Someone had some bright idea that we should design costumes for us. I was given this suede shirt thing: after two shows, it smelled so bad, that quickly went by the wayside."

"We now have lasers, and 747 landing lights," Collins writes in *Not Dead Yet*. "Genesis are becoming a jumbo-sized touring operation. For me, as the frontman, all these bells, whistles and lasers are used in the best possible taste."

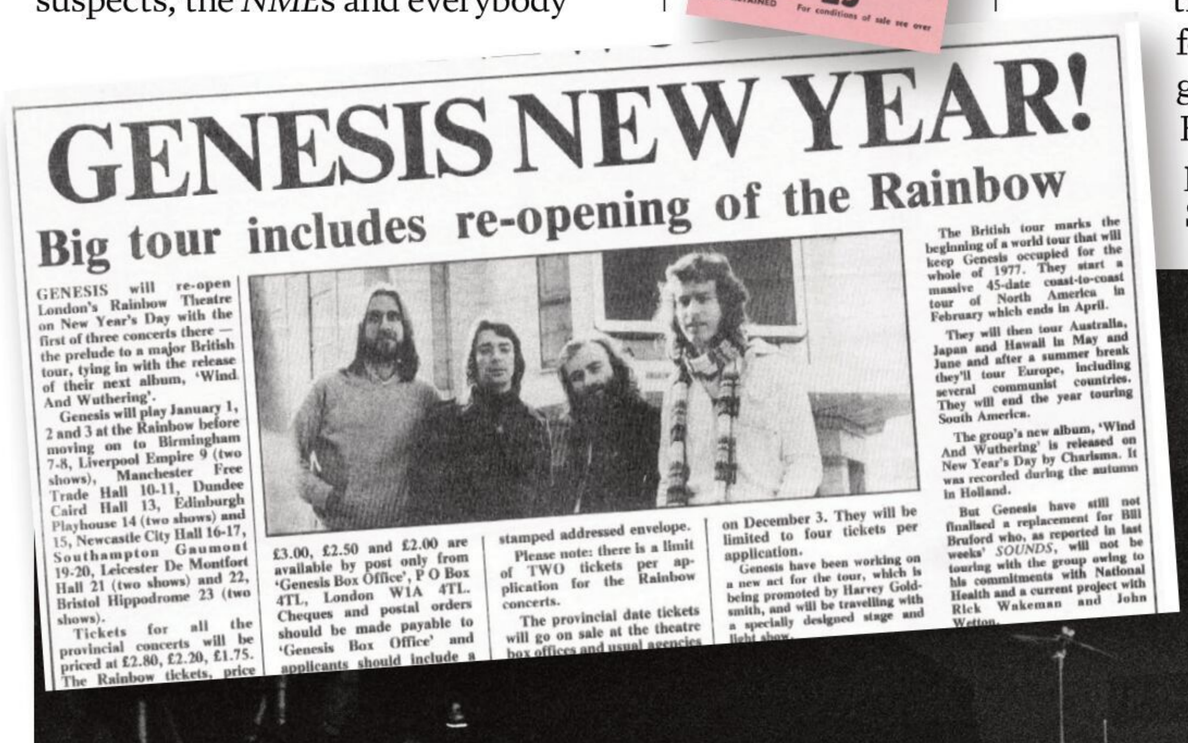
The *Wind & Wuthering* tour took in America, and the group made their debut appearance in Brazil. They returned to the UK to play three rapturously received nights at London's Earls Court. The tour ended in Munich in early July, and the band's profile was further boosted by their on-stage film *Genesis In Concert* being released in cinemas, as well as *Spot The Pigeon*, their Top 20 UK single featuring three *Wind & Wuthering* offcuts.

Aggrieved by the constraints of the band, Hackett finally left Genesis that summer during the mixing of the live album *Seconds Out*, which brought this fascinating four-piece interlude in the Genesis story to its conclusion.

So, 40 years on, how do the band feel about *Wind & Wuthering* today? "It's Tony and Steve's favourite," Rutherford laughs. "I'm never as strong on this album. If it's two of the band's favourite album, it probably means that it's not mine. I like it, and the good bits are good, but I think some of the tracks are weak."

"*Wind & Wuthering* was four young guys and all their attendant capabilities at the time and technological limitations – it's magic for the converted listener," Hackett says. "It's one of my wife's favourites: it was the

Below: the press announcement of the Rainbow gigs, and a ticket and advert for the Earls Court shows.



GENESIS NEW YEAR!

Big tour includes re-opening of the Rainbow

GENESIS will re-open London's Rainbow Theatre on New Year's Day with the first of three concerts there — the prelude to a major British tour, tying in with the release of their next album, 'Wind And Wuthering'.

Genesis will play January 1, 2 and 3 at the Rainbow before moving on to Birmingham 7-8, Liverpool Empire 9 (two shows), Manchester Free Trade Hall 10-11, Dundee Caird Hall 13, Edinburgh Playhouse 14 (two shows) and 15, Newcastle City Hall 16-17, Southampton Gaumont 19-20, Leicester De Montfort Hall 21 (two shows) and 22, Bristol Hippodrome 23 (two shows).

Tickets for all the provincial concerts will be priced at £2.80, £2.20, £1.75. The Rainbow tickets, price £3.00, £2.50 and £2.00 are available by post only from 'Genesis Box Office', P O Box 4TL, London W1A 4TL. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to 'Genesis Box Office' and applicants should include a stamped addressed envelope.

Please note: there is a limit of TWO tickets per application for the Rainbow concerts.

The provincial date tickets will go on sale at the theatre box offices and usual agencies on December 3. They will be limited to four tickets per application.

Genesis have been working on a new act for the tour, which is being promoted by Harvey Goldsmith, and will be travelling with a specially designed stage and light show.

The British tour marks the beginning of a world tour that will keep Genesis occupied for the whole of 1977. They start a massive 45-date coast-to-coast tour of North America in February which ends in April.

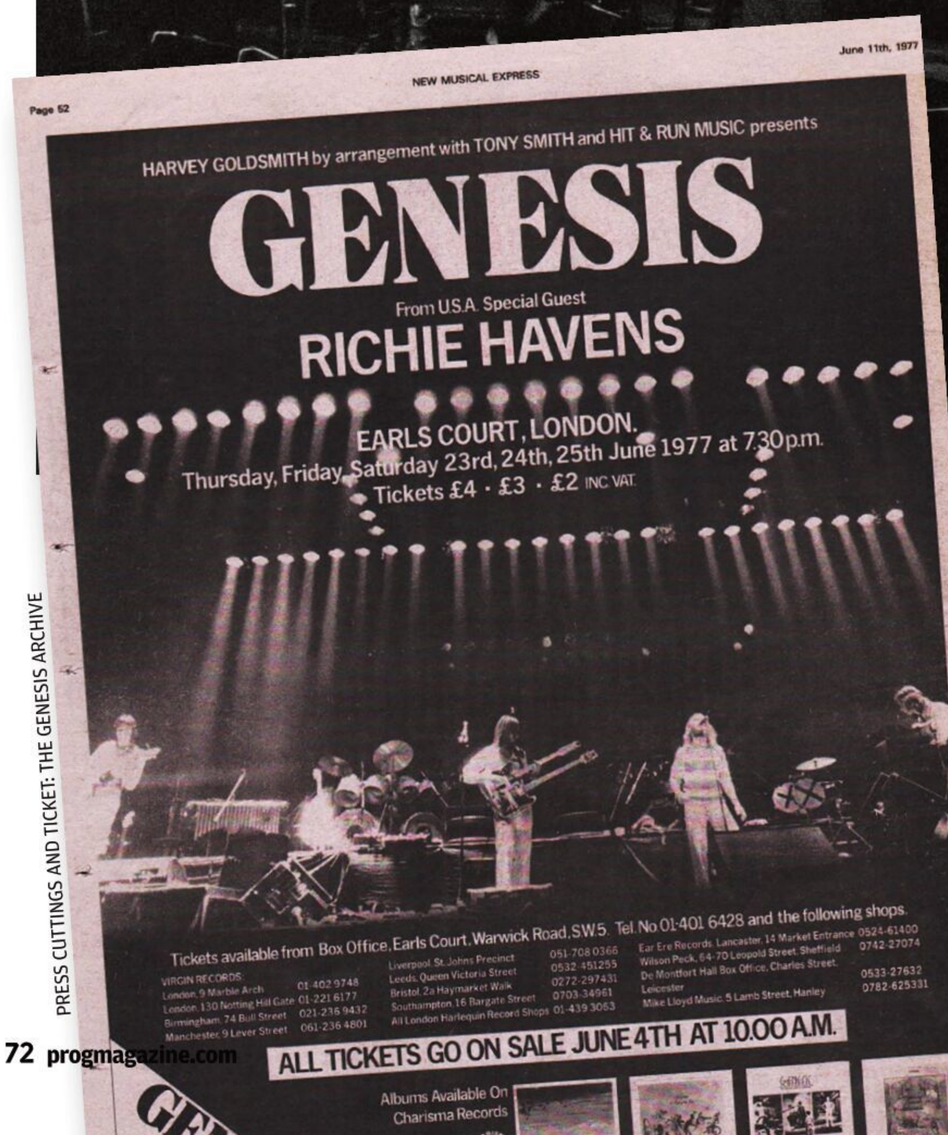
They will then tour Australia, Japan and Hawaii in May and June and after a summer break they'll tour Europe, including several communist countries. They will end the year touring South America.

The group's new album, 'Wind And Wuthering' is released on New Year's Day by Charisma. It was recorded during the autumn in Holland.

But Genesis have still not finalised a replacement for Bill Bruford who, as reported in last weeks' *SOUNDS*, will not be touring with the group owing to his commitments with National Health and a current project with Rick Wakeman and John Wetton.

L-R: Steve Hackett, Mike Rutherford, Phil Collins, Chester Thompson (drums) and Tony Banks on stage.

ELLEN POPPINGA – GETTY IMAGES



NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS June 11th, 1977

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HARVEY GOLDSMITH by arrangement with TONY SMITH and HIT & RUN MUSIC presents

GENESIS

From U.S.A. Special Guest

RICHIE HAVENS

EARLS COURT, LONDON.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 23rd, 24th, 25th June 1977 at 7.30p.m.

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Albums Available On Charisma Records

PRESS CUTTINGS AND TICKET: THE GENESIS ARCHIVE

first album she heard by Genesis and one of the ones she likes best of all. It got her at the right time – she was 15. She said that this was a band that was able to take you to different worlds and when you're a young listener, you have time to be transported. When you're in it, you don't always understand it – the true owners are not the creators; it's the listener. They hear everything that's working. Who needs to know all the rest of the detail about how difficult it was?"

"I do find that for a lot of the diehard Genesis fans, *Wind & Wuthering* is one of their favourites," Hentschel says. "*A Trick of the Tail* was great and was the first thing without Peter and was more luck than anything else. A lot more thought went into *Wind & Wuthering* and I think the diehard fanbase kind of reacted to that, and the musicality of it. You can tell a lot of thought, love and preparation went into it. It's an album that does require listening, as opposed to being quite as instant as some of the other stuff."

In 1977, Tony Banks told Genesis expert Armando Gallo that with *Wind & Wuthering*, they had made another *Foxtrot*. "I don't remember saying that, but I can almost agree with myself," Banks says today. "I think it was our most musically ambitious album of all in some ways. Some of the key changes, ideas, the lack of repetition. Aside from *Your Own Special Way* and *Afterglow*, none of the songs have any conventional design, which is good."

So, was *Wind & Wuthering* Genesis' last prog album? Michael Watts writes in the notes for the *Genesis 1976-1982* box that it felt like "their gradual farewell to progressive rock and the start of a new era".

Steve Hackett and David Hentschel agree with that opinion. "I think so, yes," Hackett says today. "I don't think they did anything after that was remotely proggy."

"Yes," Hentschel concurs. "Because then we went into *...And Then There Were Three...* and there was a conscious effort to make shorter songs, more radio-friendly stuff. So I think *Wind & Wuthering* was the last definitively prog album, without a doubt."

However, the last word must go to Tony Banks, who disagrees. "I wouldn't call it the last prog album. I think we did prog music after. *...And Then There Were Three...* was prog, but just a bit shorter. *Duke* also has a lot of aspects of what could be called prog."

All the protagonists agree that *Wind & Wuthering* most certainly *is* a progressive album, full of twisting stories and melodrama, restraint and brute strength. It's a powerful yet somehow muted statement that continues unquietly to delight its listeners after all these years.

Till The Stories Go Hazy And The Legends Come True

Wind & Wuthering is an album that's a veritable cornucopia of literary and filmic references and inspirations. Here are just some of them...

WIND & WUTHERING

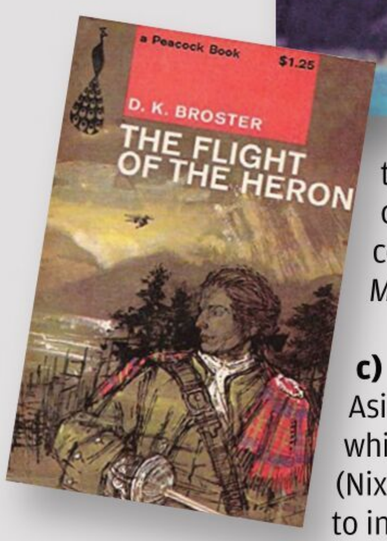
Wind & Wuthering was the original working title for the track *Unquiet Slumbers For The Sleepers... In That Quiet Earth*. It alludes to the 'wind' mentioned in *Your Own Special Way* and 'wuthering' from Emily Brontë's 1847 work, *Wuthering Heights*. 'Wuthering' itself means 'blowing strongly with a roaring sound'.

Karl Malden and Michael Douglas in *The Streets Of San Francisco*.

QUINN MARTIN/WARNER BROS TV/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

ELEVENTH EARL OF MAR

This track is about John Erskine, the 11th Earl of Mar, who was also known as 'Bobbing John' for his frequently shifting allegiances. Mike Rutherford was inspired by the Scottish history book *The Flight Of The Heron* by DK Broster, which opens with the line: "The sun had been up for a couple of hours, covered the ground with a layer of gold."



ONE FOR THE VINE

Influenced by Michael Moorcock's book *Phoenix In Obsidian*. Tony Banks says: "This guy suddenly finds himself in a snowy landscape and there's a bit of that in there. I've always liked science fantasy and fiction stuff and it's got a bit of that in it."

BLOOD ON THE ROOFTOPS

This track is brimming with references throughout the lyrics:

a) *'The Wednesday Play'*

This show ran on the BBC between 1964 and 1970, before being replaced by *Play For Today*. Many groundbreaking writers and directors, such as Ken Loach and Dennis Potter, cut their teeth here.

"The *'Wednesday Play'* line evokes the atmosphere of the piece," Banks says of Hackett's lyric. "Most of which had a bit of kitchen sink in them: that phrase encapsulated that really well."

b) *'The Queen On Christmas Day'*

Queen Elizabeth II began broadcasting her annual speech to the Commonwealth on television in 1957. At the time of Genesis writing the song, with just three TV channels in the UK, and little to tarnish the institution of the monarchy, it was as central to the festivities as *Morecambe & Wise*.

c) *'Arabs And Jews'*

Aside from the Vietnam War, which was drawing to a close (Nixon's visit to China is alluded to in the phrase *'a word from Peking'*), the conflict between Israel and the Arab states seemed to dominate world news in the 70s. It led to acts of terror such as the Munich Olympic massacre and, most recently to the time of writing the song, the Arab-Israeli (Yom Kippur) War (October 6-25, 1973).

d) *'Batman'*

Common during this period were TV re-runs of the 1960s US TV series starring Adam West and Burt Ward. All as camp as you like with its bright, garish colours and cartoon violence.

e) *'Tarzan'*

Often shown in the afternoons at weekends, the Hollywood versions of Edgar Rice Burrough's jungle dweller, starring Johnny Weissmuller and, later, Lex Barker, were a staple of television viewing at the time.

f) *'The Grime On The Tyne'*

A punning reference to Lindisfarne's *Fog On The Tyne*. Genesis famously toured with Lindisfarne on the Charisma *10 Bob Tour* in 1971. Newcastle was fictionalised on the telly in the 70s too, as Gallowshield in the gritty drama *When The Boat Comes In*, starring ex-*Likely Lad* James Bolam.

g) *'The Streets Of San Francisco'*

A Quinn Martin production, at a time when US cop shows were very much a delicacy on UK TV. Running for five seasons, the show featured Karl Malden as seasoned cop Lieutenant Michael Stone, and Michael Douglas (in four of the five seasons) as Assistant Inspector Steve Keller.

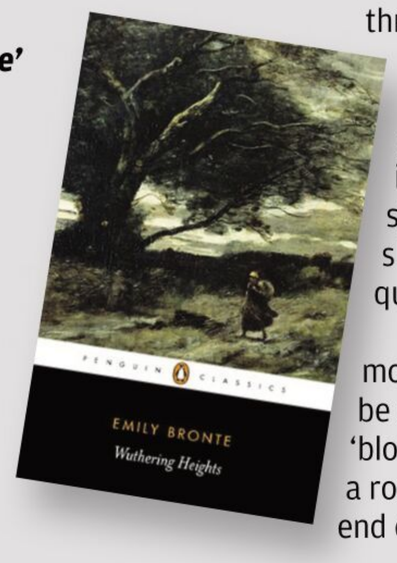
The classic 'old cop with rookie' formula was a winner due to the personalities of the leads. It premiered on British television in November 1973.

h) *'Errol Flynn'*

Born in 1909, few actors typified the edgy glamour of Hollywood more than Errol Flynn. The Tasmanian-born Flynn went to Los Angeles after spells in repertory theatre in less enchanting places such as Northampton and Malvern. Often playing the swashbuckling hero, he had an enormous reputation as a hellraiser.

UNQUIET SLUMBERS FOR THE SLEEPERS... IN THAT QUIET EARTH

Its title is taken from the closing paragraph of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. "I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."



The band can most definitely be defined as 'blowing strongly with a roaring sound' at the end of this track. **DE**

car scratch fever

In 2015, four of the greatest albums of the progressive movement were reissued on half-speed mastered heavyweight vinyl. We hear the story of **Peter Gabriel**'s first four solo albums through new interviews and extracts from *Without Frontiers: The Life And Music Of Peter Gabriel*.

Words: Daryl Easlea

Sound Of Contacts: Gabriel in Storm Thorgerson's Lancia, as pictured on the inner sleeve of *Car*.

PETER GABRIEL, AKA CAR INNER SLEEVE.1977. COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD
LARRY FAST/PRESS

In the six years from 1977-1982, Peter Gabriel released four albums that were to define him as one of the great pioneers of British rock music and set him on his course to becoming a global superstar. They are the sound of freedom: each album a step further in shaking off his Genesis past, in which every decision had to be made by committee. This now was most definitely *his* very own show.

With this quartet of self-titled albums, Gabriel brought progressive rock out of the 70s and pre-empted how the genre would move forward. By the time of his third album in 1980, he had struck his template that has lasted him to the present day. Gabriel drew on some of the best players possible, and the atmosphere of creativity fostered incredible experimentation. With each record you hear his confidence grow. From the first album, where he was being happily taught by studio master Bob Ezrin, to the second where he was working in partnership with Robert Fripp, to his third and fourth which put him very much in the driving seat, his producers (Steve Lillywhite and David Lord, respectively) absorbing and capturing his ideas.

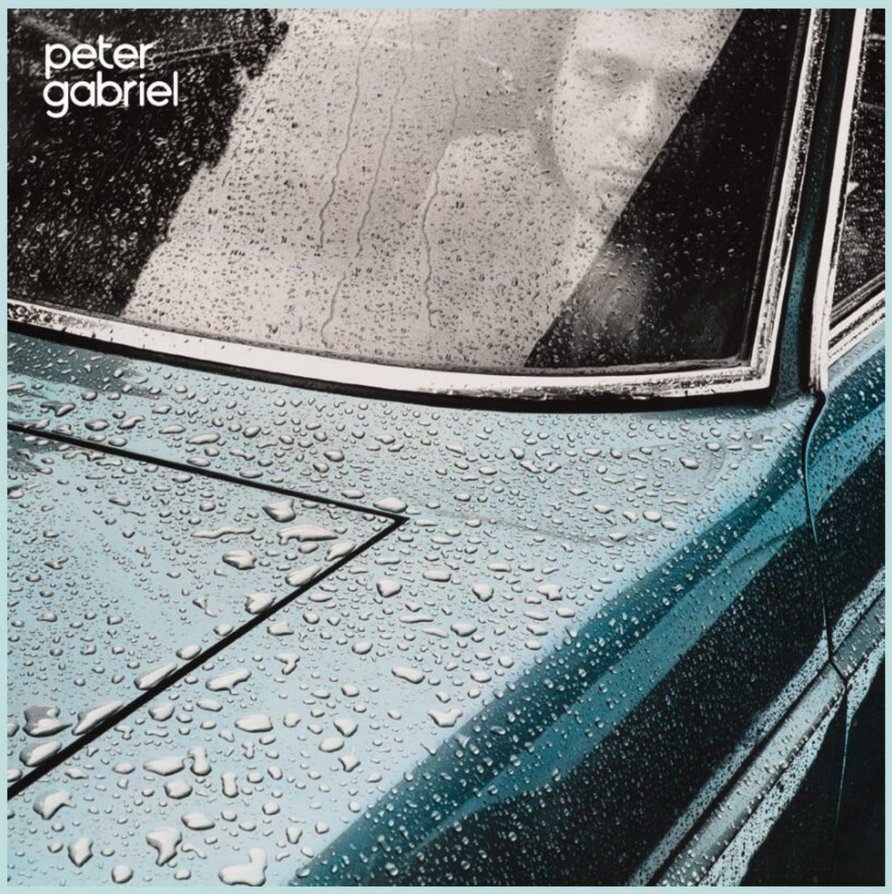
> "It was an exciting thing that he brought Robert [Fripp] into the fold, and Robert perfectly rounded out this group of misfits and musical outlaws."
>
> **Bob Ezrin on *Car***

After his final show with Genesis in April 1975, Gabriel did exactly what he said he would; he withdrew from the music business and spent more time with his family. It absolutely fascinated the papers that a star, suddenly about to achieve what he had ostensibly craved, would turn his back on it at the age of 25 to pursue domestic life. Although he had dabbled in music since leaving the band, by mid 1976, Gabriel was ready to return to the fray. He began casting his net for a producer for his first solo album, liking the idea of using someone outside the UK production system, with different ideas and a wider vision. Todd Rundgren was considered, but Bob Ezrin, who had made his name with his

L-R: Phil Aaberg, Tony Levin and Gabriel at pre-tour rehearsal in NY, February 1977.

And Then There Was One...

Steve Hackett reviews *Car*.



PHOTOGRAPHY A POWELL/S THORGERSON, COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

"I remember the first time that I heard the album was when Genesis were on the way to the States to play gigs in support of *A Trick Of The Tail*. We listened to a cassette of the album on a shared set of headphones, and we were all impressed with what he'd done. And also very pleased for him.

"What I really noticed more than anything else was that the vocals had been very well recorded by producer Bob Ezrin. Pete had gone up a notch with what he was doing here. There was a new sense of maturity and gravitas that you can hear running through his voice, and this really lifted everything to a new level. Of course, there were elements which connected him to what we had done in Genesis. For instance, a song like *Moribund The Burgermeister* reminded me of *Get 'Em Out By Friday*. Why was this? Because of the sense of humour that was evident, plus his influence from Dickens and Gilbert & Sullivan. But this was only to be expected. I would have been amazed if he'd done an album that was completely divorced from what he had done before in the past. Yet, this was definitely a solo album. You could tell that Pete was taking a lot of his inspirations and developing them in a way that he might not have been able to do when he was with Genesis. When you're in a band, you have to make decisions by committee. But Pete was now doing his own thing, and so he was able to go in any direction that he wanted.

"There was a more soulful aspect here, which I know was something that interested him, but he couldn't have gone as far as this if he had still been with the band. And a song like *Waiting For The Big One* allowed him to be more bluesy. Also *Here Comes The Flood* caught the attention, because of the way he constructed the vocals. I know that, later on, he preferred to sing this one unaccompanied, and you can hear why this works so well in the way that this track was put together. Obviously, the track that made the most impact was *Solsbury Hill*. Steve Hunter's 12-string guitar riff is so easy to hum, and gave the song a very tuneful base.

"Everything on the album was new to me at the time. I didn't recognise anything as being taken from an idea he'd been working on while with the band. And I doubt he could have done a lot of this had he stayed with Genesis, because it just wouldn't have fitted in. But here, Pete was able to give free reign to all of his musical aspirations, and he also put together a really good team of musicians who would be able to bring his dreams to life.

"I think of the album, though, as being a stepping stone. It was the first step on the path to his third solo album, when it all came together. But part of what you heard on that album is here on the debut. It deserved to be successful."

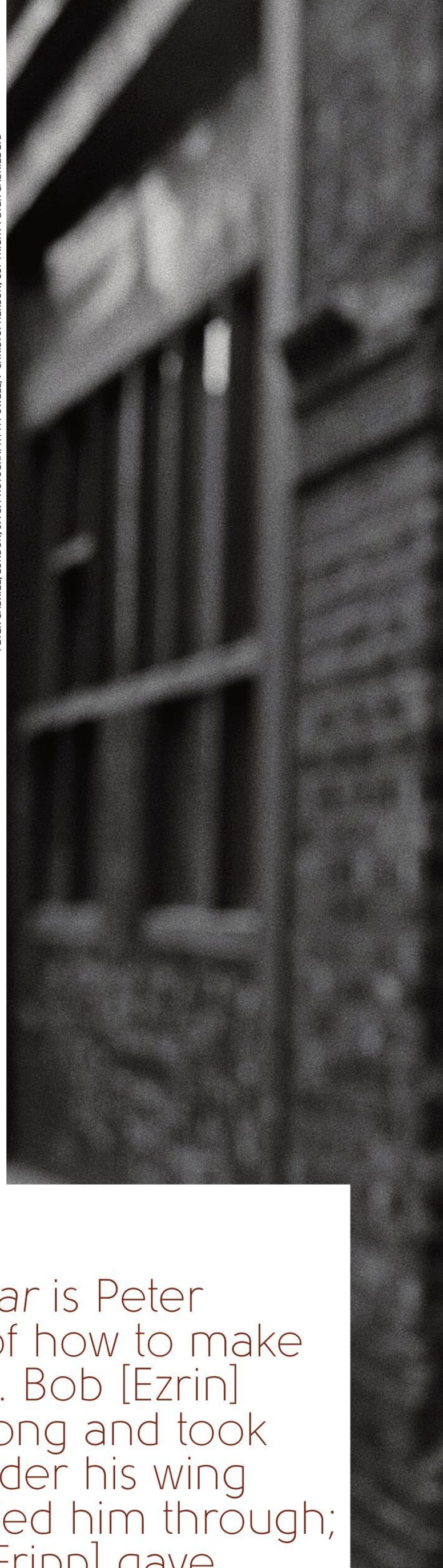
productions for Alice Cooper and Kiss was chosen, partially because of his work on Lou Reed's *Berlin*, his critically lauded, black as pitch 1973 masterpiece.

Ezrin was to select virtually *all* of the album's players, trusted session hands used to working at speed with demanding artists. "I had developed this crew of regulars that I would work with," Ezrin said in 2013. "I put them together for when I worked with solo artists who didn't come with their own band." It was through Ezrin that Gabriel met one of his longest serving and most trusted players, bassist Tony Levin. Gabriel chose two players on the album: one was keyboard player Larry Fast, who had worked with Rick Wakeman. The other was his old friend, ex-King Crimson leader Robert Fripp. "He thrived on the characters," Ezrin said. "He negotiated with me, asking if he could have one Brit: I felt we were doing a sports deal, like a football club, needing a striker. I agreed; he said, 'Can it be Robert Fripp?' It was an exciting thing that he brought Robert into the fold, and Robert perfectly rounded out this group of misfits and musical outlaws."

Gabriel relocated to Nimbus Studios in Toronto to work. The sessions were conducted in a business-like fashion: "Bob was a very forceful individual back then," Larry Fast noted. "He actually wore a whistle, like a coach, around his neck while he paced the studio during song rundowns." With such a pedigree of performer and the high-end producer, it's little wonder that Gabriel's debut album is the closest he ever came to becoming a straight down-the-line stadium rocker. From the Genesis-like *Moribund The Burgermeister* to the slamming rock of *Down The Dolce Vita*, the album is rather splendid and sometimes daft.

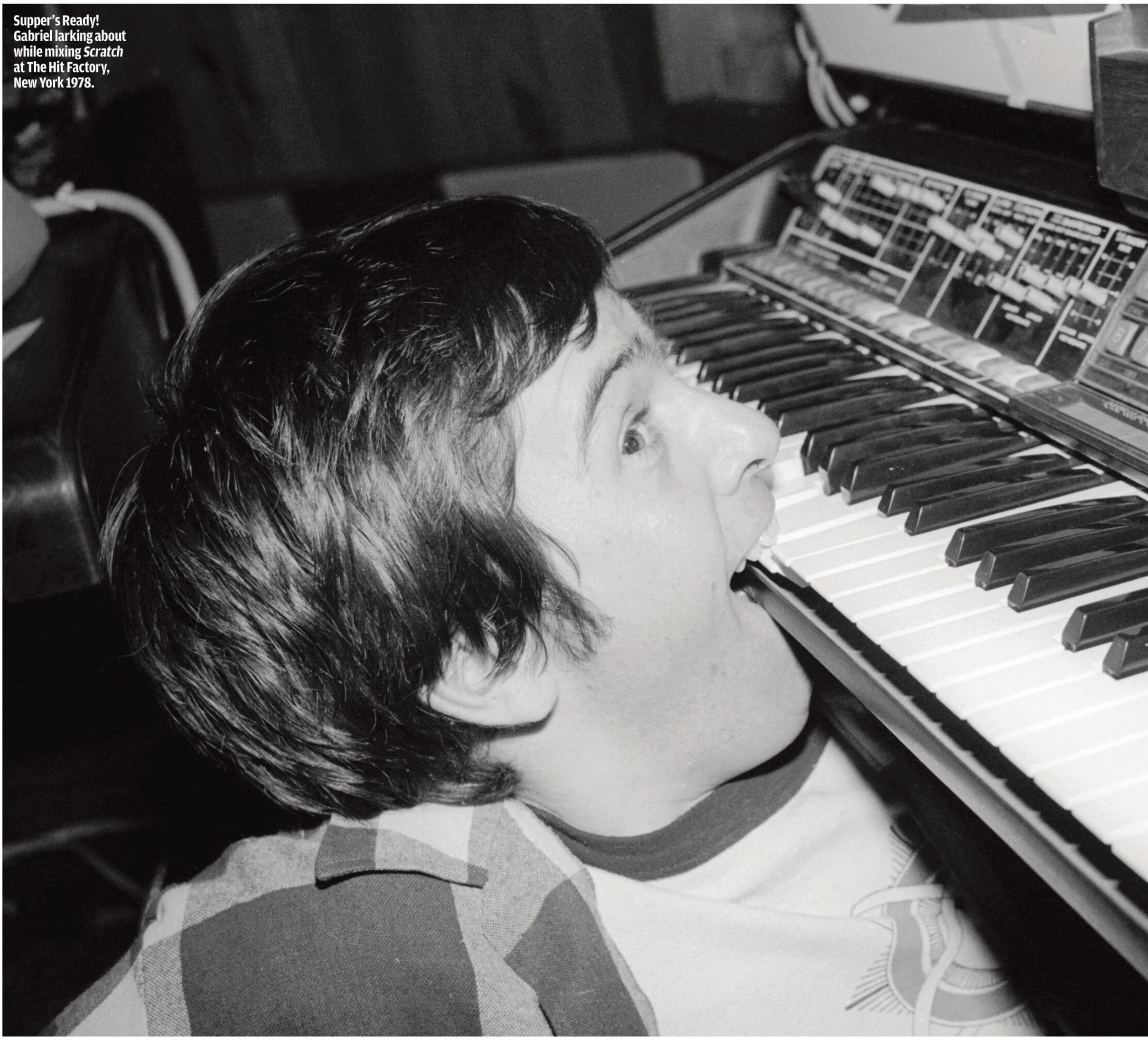
Gabriel wrote his first solo classic in *Solsbury Hill*, a record that proved he had more than enough commercial *nous* to go it alone. As Gabriel said at the time, "It's about being prepared to lose what you have for what you might get, or what you are for what you might be. It's about letting go." Its optimism

> "*Car* is Peter unsure of how to make a record. Bob [Ezrin] came along and took Peter under his wing and guided him through; Robert [Fripp] gave Peter more control with record two; *Melt* is 'I know what I'm doing now' and *Security* is hitting maturity."
>
> **Dickie Chappell**



PETER GABRIEL, LONDON, 1978. PHOTOGRAPHY A POWELL/P CHRISTOPHERSON, COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

Nailed It! Peter Gabriel poses for the *Scratch* cover in London, 1978.



Supper's Ready! Gabriel larking about while mixing *Scratch* at The Hit Factory, New York 1978.

PETER GABRIEL, NEW YORK, 1978. CONBCEPT/PHOTOGRAPHY P CHRISTOPHERSON. COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

Dynamic Duo: Fripp and Gabriel for the *Scratch* promo card.

PRESS/COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

is heartwarming, and its manifesto is clear: To succeed, you have to take risks. *Here Comes The Flood* was remarkable. Gabriel was fascinated with short wave radio, and was amazed how signal strength became stronger as daylight faded. All of this fed into the tale of barriers in individuals' thought processes being broken down so anyone can see into other people's minds and, as Gabriel said, "those inclined to concealment would drown in it." It is a brooding, intense experience that demonstrated the distinctiveness of Gabriel's writing.

The sessions finished in Toronto with a riotous meal and prize-giving ceremony at the Napoleon Restaurant: "I gave out gifts to acknowledge everyone's contribution," Ezrin said.

"Peter was dressed in his white three-piece suite with a black shirt and a hat and he wore his ball-bearing contact lenses behind dark glasses. I gave Tony Levin a tuba, and I gave Fripp a beautiful gold antique pocket watch on a chain." The assembled players then all sang an a capella version of the album's barbershop quartet number, *Excuse Me*.

"I really wanted the first record to be different from what I'd done with Genesis so we were trying to do things in different styles," Gabriel said in 2015. "A bit of barbershop, which Tony Levin helped with, there were more bluesy things, a variety of songs and arrangements that were consciously trying to provide something different than what I'd done before."

> "It's about being prepared to lose what you have for what you might get, or what you are for what you might be. It's about letting go."
>
> **Peter Gabriel**

THEY HAVE THE TOUCH

Details of the deluxe reissues.

Peter Gabriel's first four (plus two) albums have been released in half-speed remastered versions and have been cut to lacquers at 45RPM, across two 180gm LPs, to offer maximum dynamic sound range. We are told that they have never sounded so good, and *Prog* are delighted to say that on listening, they truly never have. The vinyl was cut by Matt Colton at Alchemy Mastering, mastered by Tony Cousins at Metropolis and overseen by Gabriel's long-serving engineer Dickie Chappell.

You can almost hear the love for these records in their handling, assembled by the best-in-their-field: "My relationship with Tony goes back years, and he was very welcoming when I started as an engineer," Chappell notes. "Matt is very similar, approachable. He's a workhorse. They are definitely analogue and vinyl nutcases at Alchemy."

The masters come from the 96K archive that was assembled in 2002. "That was when we revisited everything," Chappell notes. "It was a good way of readdressing the catalogue and making sure our archive was up to scratch. Peter listened to everything through and spent a lot of time with Tony at Metropolis. When Peter works on a song, he doesn't really hear it again unless he plays it live; he doesn't go back to his catalogue unless he had to review."

"We sat down with Peter and said we needed to do the vinyl again, as I knew we could get better out now," Chappell notes. "Peter definitely stamped the 96K stuff, so that was a good place to go back to." **DE**

The album, simply titled *Peter Gabriel*, was released in the UK on February 25 1977. Hipgnosis designed a heavily colourised distant and mysterious sleeve that featured Gabriel sitting in Storm Thorgerson's rain-soaked Lancia Flavia. It gave the album its simple, colloquial name of *Car*. With a tag-line of 'Expect the unexpected on the new Peter Gabriel album', *Car* reached a respectable No. 7 in the UK and No. 38 in the US. *Rolling Stone* said, "This is an impressively rich debut album. And I still don't know what to expect from him next."

After extensive touring for *Car*, his second album, also titled *Peter Gabriel*, followed in June 1978, with *Car* guitarist Robert Fripp as producer. "I really like two, it takes a while," Gabriel's long-term engineer, Dickie Chappell, says. "I think Peter thought it was made *too* fast. There's some great songs on there and it has its own atmosphere; it's very bright, brittle

And Then There Were Two...

Jakko Jakszyk reviews *Scratch*.

PHOTOGRAPHY A POWELL/P CHRISTOPHERSON, COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

"I remember at the time I was in a band called 64 Spoons. We were playing at University London Union (ULU), and were supported by a punk band. This spikey haired guy came right up to me, and said to one of his bandmates, 'Get this bloke. He can play guitar. What a wanker!' At that point, my whole world crumbled. But when I heard this album, suddenly everything made sense to me. Because Peter Gabriel appeared to be telling everyone that it was still okay to be musical, but you can do it with shorter songs.

"For me, this album was something of a surprise. Peter was still getting away from the machinery of Genesis and finding his path through to a brave new musical world. Obviously here, the songs are sharper than perhaps we had come to expect from him in the past. I suppose, Peter was definitely stripping back a lot of the extravagance that had been a part of how he'd built his reputation. I guess you could say that he was acknowledging the way in which times had moved on.

"However, while this album certainly has songs which were kept within a shorter framework than might have been the case in the past, there was still room for interesting time signatures and you can hear the way musicianship was encouraged. It was a bridge between the way Peter had done things before with Genesis, and the way he wanted to go.

"Like the previous album, there's a sense here that Peter was in transition. You can appreciate he's reaching out for ideas that weren't quite in focus as yet, but were getting there. I was a big fan of Robert Fripp, and so was very keen to hear how he produced the album. I already knew about his work with Frippertronics, but had never really understood how this could be applied to a song. But as soon as I heard *Exposure*, which used this tape looping technique brilliantly, I completely got how this was adaptable to being part of a track, rather than merely an intriguing effect. In this way, I believe Robert helped to take the Gabriel artistry forward.

"There are some quite wonderful songs on the album. I was very impressed with *On The Air* and *D.I.Y.*, the opening two tracks on the record. And *White Shadow* is just beautiful. There are some moments which are just too American for my tastes, but overall that never really spoilt my enjoyment of the record.

"I'd say this really a stepping stone to what Peter would do on his third. That's when everything fell cohesively into place and worked spectacularly well. But to dismiss this one as the means to get that moment is unfair. This is an artist in the throes of creating his niche, but in doing so he also came up with some fascinating musical ideas. Maybe it has to be partially acknowledged in the context of what was to come, but it certainly deserves respect."

sounding." This album was recorded at the quickest pace of any in his career. As Eric Tamm notes in his biography of Robert Fripp, "If *Peter Gabriel* 1977 sounds like it was recorded in a heavenly cathedral, *Peter Gabriel* 1978 sounds like it comes out of a dingy garage."

The album was to be known as *Scratch* because of its distinctive, Hipgnosis-designed sleeve. Although partially recorded at Relight Studios, Hilvarenbeek in the Netherlands, its sound primarily was that of New York, where the remainder of the album was recorded at the Hit Factory. It's sparse, harder and emotional. Less people were in the studio and the band gelled; Levin, Fripp and Fast were back. Jerry Marotta came in on drums. Among others, Roy Bittan from the E-Street Band added his unmistakable piano lines.

"Robert was very keen to get everything fresh," Gabriel said in 1978. "We kept a lot of early takes and kept the production very dry. The second album is more spontaneous." It's the Peter Gabriel album that few seem to know in 2015. Standout moments include the sea of synthetics that introduce *On The Air*. Its five and a half minutes are neatly answered by the two-and-a-half minutes of *D.I.Y.*; with its crisp snare snap and acoustic guitars, *D.I.Y.* is another plea for independence, chiming with the 'do it yourself' ethos of the New Wave movement. *White Shadow* is subversive AOR, it arrives with all of Fripp's floating ambience based on Fast's swathes of synthesizers. *Exposure* is one of the album's highlights. Introduced by Fripp's unmistakable guitar, it is a dense, brooding funk that appears from nowhere and seems to linger forever.

Scratch was released in June 1978. *Sounds* concluded, "This new Peter Gabriel album is absolutely *it*. It hasn't left my turntable yet and doesn't look like it's going to. It couldn't happen to a finer artist. Just listen." The to-the-bone subject matter and experimental playing of *Scratch* demonstrated Gabriel's growing confidence. Writing in the *NME*, Nick Kent said of *Scratch*: "closer to the root of the album, there's a purity of strength to the songs individual enough to mark Gabriel out as a man whose creative zenith is close at hand."

The album's supporting tour saw Gabriel and his band dressed in worker's fluorescents and guesting at high profile festival gigs with The Stranglers and The Boomtown Rats. Gabriel shaved off his hair. He was stripped clean, a symbolic shearing of the lamb. "People react to a shaved head differently to how they do to a soft hairy one," he said, with some understatement.

"I tried to do a lot of things to separate me from Genesis," Gabriel told *Uncut* in 2012. "Sometimes you'd see people leave bands and do watered-down versions of what the band had done. I was determined not to do that. I was keen to get a new audience. It took me until album number three before I found an identity." "It all starts to come into focus on the third album," Dickie Chappell notes. "It's my favourite... there is something about the arrangements and the harmonies used, the sound is pretty nuts."

This Woman's Work: Kate Bush and Gabriel at The Townhouse during the making of *Melt*.

LARRY FAST/PRESS/COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

RIGHT: FIN COSTELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Produced by Steve Lillywhite, the album features notable contributions from Kate Bush, Phil Collins, Paul Weller, Robert Fripp, Dave Gregory and future Gabriel stalwart David Rhodes. Recording began in earnest when, after demoing tracks and ideas in Bath, Gabriel located to The Townhouse in London. Gabriel's choice of producer Lillywhite and engineer Hugh Padgham was pivotal. Bringing in a young team meant that ideas could easily flow. "Steve and Hugh provided a very good balance in coordinating and capturing Peter's creativity without impressing their own obvious stamp on it," Fast says. The album featured a

Rebel With A Cause:
Gabriel's skinhead look
gets a glaring.

considerable amount of innovation. *Intruder* was Gabriel at his most sonically adventurous. He was determined not to have any cymbals on the album, finding them too splashy and detracting from the core rhythm. Gabriel's motto when recording the album was simple: no middle ground.

The loud, aggressive drum sound of *Intruder* — played by Phil Collins and recorded by Hugh Padgham — is the first thing the listener hears. Collins and Padgham's experimentation at Gabriel's insistence set a template for 80s pop to follow. "I remember Phil coming in to the rehearsals for *Duke* with a tape of the drum loop they'd done," Gabriel's ex-Genesis bandmate Tony Banks recalls. "With the gated reverb. Phil played it to us, and he told us Peter was writing a song on top of it. I thought it was fantastic." The record had a cavernous vacancy that could at once be filled with eerie otherworldly noises, most often Gabriel's vocal tics, or random percussion.

If the opening wasn't strange enough in itself, the record swooped into *No Self Control,* an unrelenting view of schizophrenia and paranoia. Gabriel's maniacal spoken-sung whisper is supported by the track's insistent backing vocals, provided by Gabriel's new friend and collaborator, Kate Bush. Bush was to add backing vocals to both *No Self Control* and, importantly, *Games Without Frontiers*.

I Don't Remember demonstrated how the new toy, the Fairlight CMI synthesiser, could be incorporated into conventional rock, with its sample of bricks banging together and milk bottles smashing, adding to the otherworldliness of its sound. Gabriel was one of the first musicians in the UK to use the Fairlight, which, within a matter of years, would completely transform the way music was made. The synthesiser — which was invented in Australia and cost a cool £10,000 a pop — could sample natural sounds and play them back at a variety of pitches and tones. Gabriel invested in Fairlight and persuaded his cousin, Stephen Paine, to come in with him, establishing the company Syco Systems importing and distributing the instruments in the UK. "Peter was like the Remington guy," Chappell laughs. "It was a revolution in sound; hip hop wouldn't have been hip hop without the samples; it led to producer technology; So *Melt* (and *4*) are a bit of a landmark in the way that people then went on to make music."

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The making of *Melt*, clockwise from top left: background vocalists for *Biko*; picking the cover art; Gabriel breaking glass; Gabriel and David Rhodes.

Melt is full of highlights — *Family Snapshot* is one of his most emotional performances; *And Through The Wire* has a power pop edge thanks to Paul Weller's guitar chords. *Games Without Frontiers* was chosen as the album's lead single. Gabriel was inspired by the daftness of primetime BBC TV programme *It's A Knockout*. Allegedly French President Charles De Gaulle commented that a fun competition between everyday people of France and Germany would lead to greater understanding between the countries, inspiring the programme. Gabriel thought the symbolism of the show was ripe for exploring, demonstrating that all of this jollity cloaked simmering resentment. One of the best assessments of the futility of aggrandising nationalism ever to reach the UK Top Five, the song offered a fine example of Gabriel's new sonic landscape. Gabriel could experiment and still deliver one of the biggest hits of his career.

And then, there's *Biko*. It is the track that marked the true beginning of the

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LARRY FAST/PRESS/COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

next phase of his career. Gabriel had been finding rock rhythms limiting, and hit upon this hypnotic African-inspired pattern. But it was the subject matter that really was a departure for Gabriel. He had noted in his diary the death of student activist Stephen Biko at the hands of the South African police in September 1977. Like many white liberals with an awareness of events in South Africa, Gabriel was shocked by the brutality and the subsequent cover-up by police, and decided to capture his thoughts in song. Gabriel was acutely aware of his lack of authenticity to become a champion of causes in far off countries, but that in no way blunted his passion and sincerity for the subject. All of this lyrical content would have meant nothing without the remarkable musical setting Gabriel and his team put together to support it. With its portentous opening drum rhythm (inspired by Gabriel hearing the theme music to the Stanley Baker film *Dingaka*) and drone guitar played by Rhodes, this was very different to

And Then There Were Three...

David Longdon reviews *Melt*.

PHOTOGRAPHS A POWELL/P CHRISTOPHERSON/S THORGERSON. COPYRIGHT PETER GABRIEL LTD

"*Peter Gabriel 3* or *Melt* as it is unofficially called, is radical, assertive and uncompromising in its vision. Gabriel utilised new developments within music technology of the era and explored the possibilities of this new musical landscape. It has stood the test of time remarkably well. The striking sleeve artwork by Hipgnosis, used photographic techniques devised by Les Krims to 'melt' Gabriel's face.

"The album was written using the Fairlight CMI 2, an incredibly expensive digital sampling synthesiser that allowed the recording and manipulation of sound. It was an instrument that would become a mainstay for Gabriel for many years.

"Lean and muscular, *PG3* is a dark and unsettling listening experience with many emotional and dramatic moments. The sinister *Intruder* nails its colours to the mast from the off. Gabriel's voice is dry and croaky, complete with eerie whistling and tense, sometimes dissonant instrumentation. It feels predatory and creepy. It is also the debut of the thunderous gated drum sound, a sound that would define a musical decade.

"Gabriel insisted that no hi-hats and cymbals were to be used, which added lots of space within the soundscape. Tribal sounding drums and vocals abide and voices and instruments are processed then placed strategically within the stereo image.

"Although not regarded as a concept album, themes run throughout. *No Self Control*, *I Don't Remember* and *Lead A Normal Life* could be about the same character, who is seemingly out of control and compulsive with failings of mind and memory. The latter song offers psychiatric help, peace and redemption.

"*Games Without Frontiers* reached No. 4 in the UK. In the video, children are sat around a dining table aping adult behaviour, while Gabriel capers unnoticed between them, in a mocking and sinister fashion. The song is possibly about the futility of war and the childish failings within mankind.

"The assassin in *Family Snapshot* makes his mark by a murderous act. Gabriel would have been a teenager when JFK was assassinated and this draws on that memory. It also chillingly predicts a future event in December of 1980 when Mark Chapman would fire five bullets beneath the archway of The Dakota. The closing section shows the character returning to his childhood and facing the formative events that would forge him.

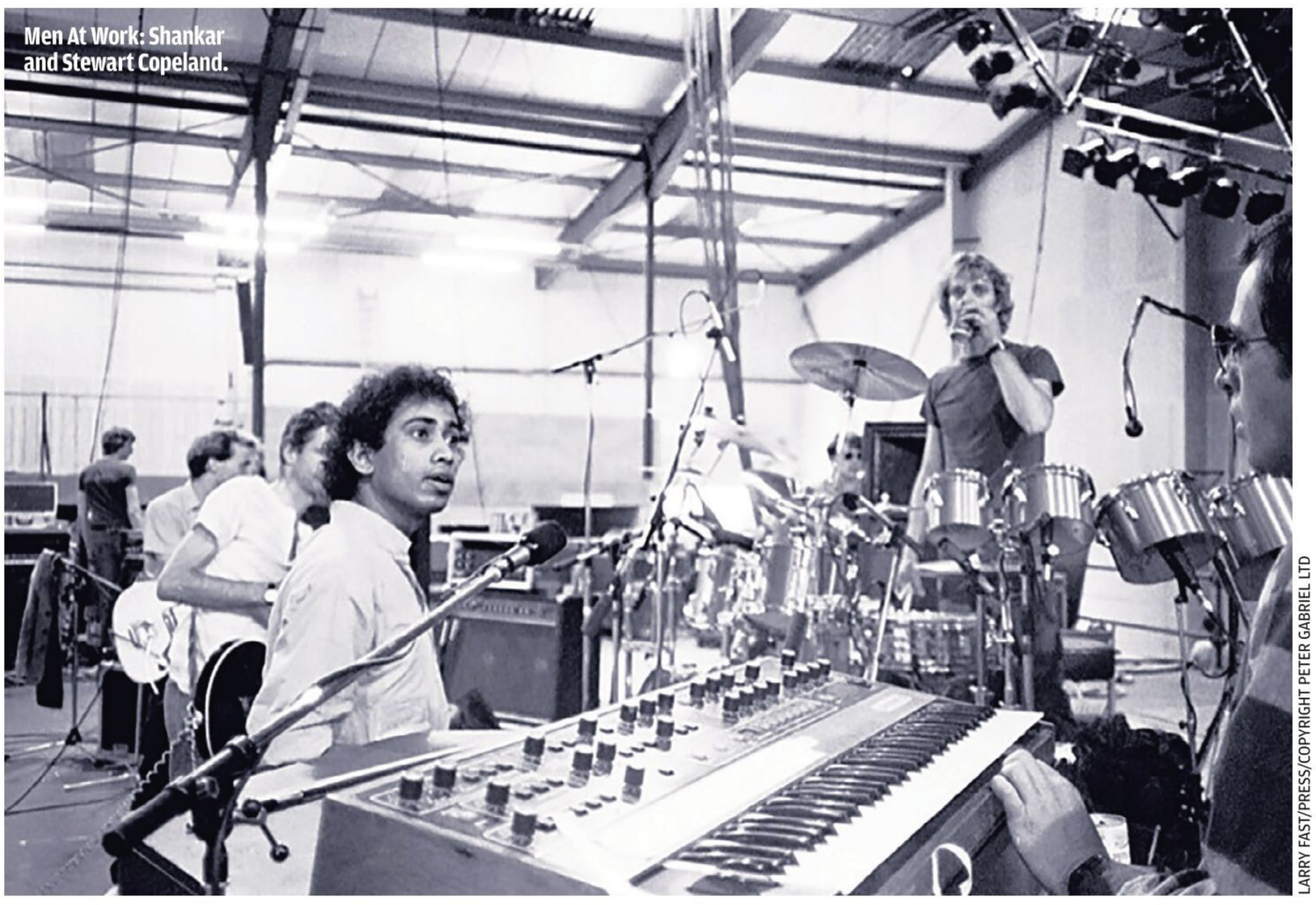
"*Biko* is Gabriel's anthemic protest song about the death of black anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko. Its hypnotic rhythm draws from Gabriel's profound interest in world music. Gabriel founded WOMAD in the same year as this album was released. *'You can put out a candle, but you can't put out a fire'* is the poignant and powerful lyric which summed up the political plight and feeling of the situation. Gabriel closes the album with the cautionary line *'and the eyes of the world are watching now'*, placing the ball very much in their court."

> The third album was brilliant, and I thought the fourth album was probably slightly better. In terms of composition it was wonderful. *San Jacinto* is probably my favourite of Pete's tracks. I would have been a big fan of Pete's even if I hadn't known him.
>
> **Tony Banks**

Suited And Booted: Gabriel on *Shock The Monkey* shoot.

anything Gabriel had recorded to date. It was probably the ultimate expression of the album's 'no middle ground' policy. *Biko* set him on a course that would see Gabriel become one of the most impassioned campaigners for Civil Rights in popular music.

The album was released on May 30 1980. For its distinctive sleeve, Hipgnosis created one of Gabriel's most enduring and disturbing images, manipulating the images from a Polaroid camera when the ink was still wet. It produced strange, wayward and distorted pictures: Gabriel's face was melting in front of his audience. He looked like a cross between a bizarre candle and a relief map of high ground. As a result, the album picked up its colloquial title, *Melt*. The lean and gripping *Melt* was rapturously received. It went to No. 1 in the UK in June, where it remained for two weeks, giving Gabriel his first chart-topper. In the US, the album was infamously rejected by Atlantic, "Ahmet [Ertegun]



Men At Work: Shankar and Stewart Copeland.

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Feel The Beat: The recording of *The Rhythm Of The Heat*.

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suggested that Peter might have had some sort of a breakdown during the writing of it," Gabriel's then-manager Gail Colson said. Dave Marsh, writing in *Rolling Stone* said on the album's eventual US release (on Mercury) in September 1980: "Lucid and driven, Peter Gabriel's third solo album sticks in the mind like the haunted heroes of the best film *noirs*."

In mid 1980, Gabriel retreated to Bath and began work on his next album with producer David Lord. A considerable amount of money was spent on equipping the studio at Gabriel's home, Ashcombe House aka 'Shabby Road'. Gabriel allowed TV cameras to capture his work in progress. Little did they know that the album would take 16 months to complete. The result was on October 31 1982; Gabriel was elevated to the august band of musicians who were featured on the Melvyn Bragg-fronted prestigious UK arts programme *The South Bank Show*. The documentary caught Gabriel's methodically painstaking processes on camera.

"David Lord came from a classical background and had the same high standards for audio excellence," Larry Fast, who returned for his fourth album with Gabriel, recalls. "But he continued to let Peter take his own creative lead while quietly corralling the bits together as the ideas took form. On *Melt* the Fairlight was the icing on the cake," Fast was to say. "On the fourth album it *was* the cake on many tracks." It was a painstaking, detailed approach. Ideas were constantly being worked out; Lord and Gabriel were left with 27 16-minute tapes, and over seven hours of material. Different versions of 18 separate songs, several of which were running at over 10 minutes in length. Gabriel, Lord and Fast then spent three further months piecing everything together.

The subject matter was mature and intense: *The Rhythm Of The Heat* was one of the first ideas that Gabriel brought into the sessions. Gabriel had read Carl Jung's book *Symbols And The Interpretation Of Dreams*. To understand the native psyche, Jung joined a group of drummers and dancers in Africa and became overwhelmed with fear. Gabriel was fascinated by this. In the song's frantic, hypnotic rhythms, Gabriel attempts to capture this accelerating panic. *San Jacinto* looked at the clash of cultures around the Native American and the world in which they live. *Shock The Monkey* sounds hit parade after all of this. And indeed, it gave Gabriel his first US Top 40 single propelled by its strange, otherworldly video, directed by then-hot video director Brian Grant. After a slow build, *Lay Your Hands On Me* gives way to an impassioned plea for intimacy. Evoking a dream-like rapture, the beautiful ambiguity of the lyric is bolstered by the *Biko*-like drumming onslaught and mass vocals.

There was a great deal going on in Gabriel's world around the release of *Security* – he had instigated the first WOMAD Festival in July 1982, an artistic triumph and a financial disaster. When his old bandmates in Genesis heard of Gabriel's predicament, they proposed a one-off reunion concert, *Six Of The Best*, at Milton Keynes Bowl that October (which was of course to prove a great, if very wet, success).

Security (as it was titled in the States at the request his new label boss David Geffen) was released in September

Eine kleine Nachtmusik

Gabriel's German excursion.

To reflect the experimentation of the age, Peter Gabriel recorded versions of *Melt (Ein Deutsches Album)* and *Security (Deutsches Album)* in German. "I wrote to the French, Italian, German and Spanish labels, saying I wanted to experiment creating a version of my album in another language," Gabriel said. "The only label to show any interest was the German, hence the choice." In true Gabriel fashion, simply removing his vocals from the existing records and singing a translated version was not enough. "It also gave me a chance to try new mixing and remixing approaches, with some new overdubs." These new versions were, especially on *Security*, at times, radically diverse. "The German stuff is brilliant, really interesting," Dickie Chappell says. "I hadn't paid that much attention to it over the years, maybe getting a *Shock The Monkey (Schock Den Affen)* up out of the archive for Peter to re-sing on tour."

"The mixes are all really different," he adds. "From a fan's point of view, whether you speak German or not, there is a whole other thing going on. Some are longer, there's added stuff, on *Security* there is some Fairlight that Peter still goes on about now. He played a snare drum and got a loop going; he sped it up, so the sound changed and turned into a note. He was so into it he put it on the German record, so it could be definitely captured somewhere."

Finally, the pair of German albums gave Gabriel the opportunity another chance to evaluate his precious words. He took "another look at the lyrics through the process of translation." Gabriel worked with German writer and film director Horst Königstein. "I spent a long time going through layers of meaning in the new language – I also insisted on having the German lyrics independently translated back to English." They are often a fascinating listen: the percussiveness of the language makes Gabriel's voice another instrument and he sounds comfortable singing in an another tongue; he revels in the annunciation of *Kon Takt! (I Have The Touch)* and luxuriates in the drama of *Spiel Ohne Grenzen (Games Without Frontiers)*. Often simply dismissed as a curio, these releases are the footnote that provide considerable illumination to where Peter Gabriel was at in the early 1980s. **DE**

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1982. Reviews were mixed. *NME*'s Gavin Martin wrote, "What is it that makes Gabriel and his ilk think that to address misery and depression the artist must sound miserable and depressed?" Yet Richard Cook as part of his *NME* interview with Gabriel at the time said saliently, "It is Gabriel's first step at repositioning the heroic pretensions of rock." "The third album was brilliant, and I thought the fourth album was probably slightly better," Tony Banks was to say. "In terms of composition it was wonderful. *San Jacinto* is probably my favourite of Pete's tracks. I would have been a big fan of Pete's even if I hadn't known him."

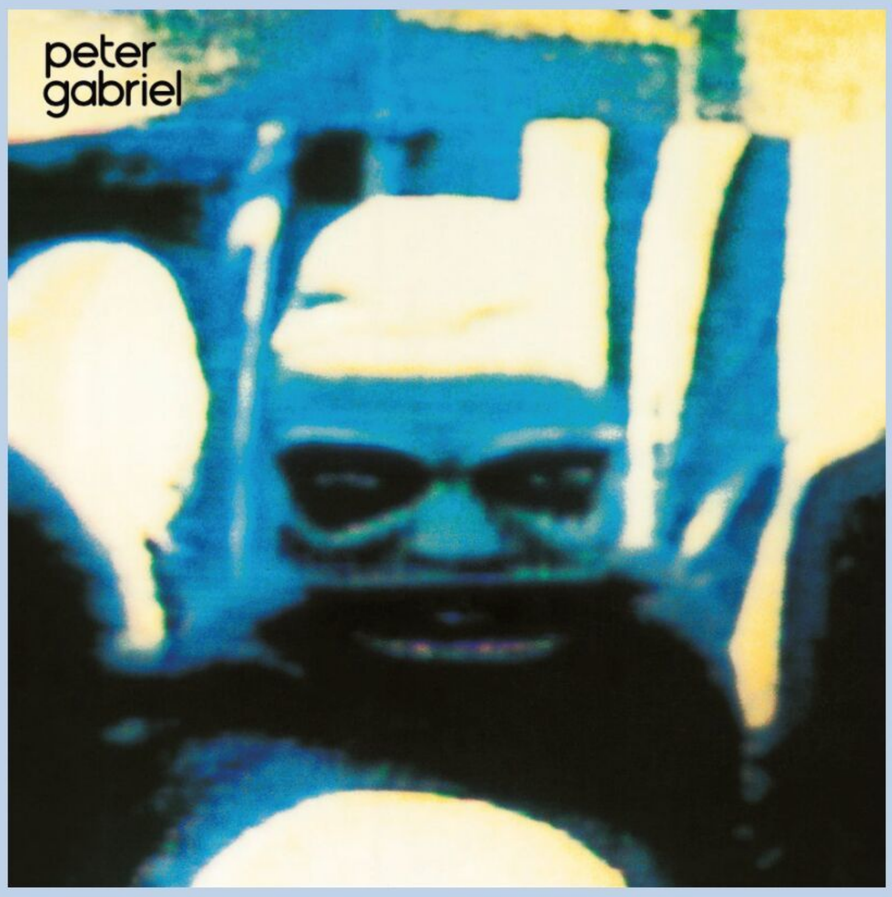
The tour to support *Security* was large, and helped build and secure Gabriel's fanbase in the States. Characteristically cryptic, the shows were entitled *Playtime 1988*, and they finally found the balance between his rejection of his Genesis persona on his early tours, and greater theatricality. The show was engaging and melodramatic. Working with Levin, Rhodes, Fast and Marotta, the band settled into the North American tour, riding on the wave of goodwill that the success of *Shock The Monkey* had provided. It was to be the final tour on which Gabriel hid behind any mask or make-up; within two years, Peter Saville would be supervising clean-cut photoshoots for him, and *So* was just around the corner.

The first four Gabriel albums are the foundations on which his solo career rests: "*Car* is Peter unsure of how to make a record," Dickie Chappell says. "Bob came along and took Peter under his wing and guided him through; Robert gave Peter more control with record two; *Melt* is 'I know what I'm doing now' and *Security* is hitting maturity. There was definitely a different process happening then. Now Peter divides his time between music, human rights and technology; he's definitely in a different chapter." Between 1977 and 1982, Peter Gabriel set a high benchmark. Never have four consecutive albums by the same artist had such different atmospheres. Over 33 years since the last of the four were released, *Car*, *Scratch*, *Melt* and *Security* still sound contemporary and all still invite the listener to expect the unexpected; a sharp reminder of a different time.

> "I remember Phil [Collins] coming in to the rehearsals for *Duke* with a tape of the drum loop they'd done. With the gated reverb. Phil played it to us, and he told us Peter was writing a song on top of it. I thought it was fantastic."
>
> **Tony Banks on *Scratch***

And Then There Were Four...

Tim Bowness reviews *Security*.



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"Like Kate Bush's equally brilliant *The Dreaming* (released only seven days after *PG4*), Peter Gabriel's fourth solo album was an innovative fusion of cutting-edge sampling, primal rhythms, provocative globe-spanning lyrics, soulful singing, and strikingly memorable songs.

"By 1982, Peter Gabriel was part of an elite group of 'old wave' musicians (including Bowie, Eno, Fripp, Hammill and Bill Nelson) who'd managed the task of winning over the hostile punk-obsessed media of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Appealing to sceptical Year Zero-ists, traditional prog fans, and those interested in where music was heading, Gabriel had even been the subject of a *South Bank Show*.

"Gabriel's 1977 debut was big and bold, and in *Solsbury Hill* and *Here Comes The Flood* contained two of his greatest anthems. His 1978 follow-up offered a blend of exquisite ballads and punked-up rockers with a stark production and a Springteen-esque swagger. As good as the albums were and as successful as Gabriel had been in creating a new post-Genesis identity, both releases seemed more the result of Gabriel's choice of producers (Bob Ezrin and Robert Fripp respectively) than a unified or personal vision.

"With his third album (released in 1980), Gabriel transformed himself from fascinating outsider to musical prophet. Anticipating the tribal percussive assault of post-punk, the melodrama of new romantic, and the world music experiments of Paul Simon and others, *Melt* showcased a new approach for Gabriel himself and for contemporary music as a whole.

"Album number four had a lot to live up to. Starting with two of Gabriel's most ambitious pieces, *The Rhythm Of The Heat* and *San Jacinto*, from the off it was clear that *PG4* was taking the promise and the core elements of *Melt* even further. Gabriel's voice was full, throaty and emotional, and the music – sounding simultaneously ancient and ultra-modern – had more space to roam and a greater dynamic range.

"Lyrics about Jung's experiences in Africa, US cultural imperialism and the ritualistic nature of the seemingly mundane, mingled with the claustrophobic and poignant prisoner of conscience narrative of hymnal highlight *Wallflower*.

"As on *Melt*, Gabriel's use of revolutionary instruments (like the Fairlight CMI, the LinnDrum and the Stick) served to illuminate his song's contents rather than swamp them with pointless novelty.

"Like the album's opening pieces, deep cuts *Lay Your Hands On Me* and *The Family And The Fishing Net* were as epic as anything Gabriel had written with Genesis, yet shared almost nothing of his former band's musical vocabulary (or anybody else's for that matter).

"*PG4* was (and remains) a shining example of a truly rare thing, genuinely innovative genuinely popular music."

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Behind some of the best music ever recorded is a story of fast friends and ferocious bust-ups; stunning creativity and punishing cocaine abuse. In 2013, as he geared up to released his confessional autobiography, *The Living Years*, ever-present **Genesis** guitarist **Mike Rutherford** gave *Prog* a very personal look back at the highs and lows of a lifetime in music.

Words: Mark Blake **Portraits:** Kevin Nixon

His Own Special Way

On April 18, 1972, Genesis play The Piper Club in Rome. A TV crew interview the group backstage before filming them performing to an audience of rapt Italians. Despite Steve Hackett's Zapata moustache and Phil Collins' Dickensian sideburns, everyone in the group looks impossibly young. There's boyish Peter Gabriel with a triangular chunk shaved out of his centre parting; there's an even more boyish Tony Banks, wearing a pensive expression and a sensible jumper; and then there's Mike Rutherford.

The guitarist/bassist flashes a lazy grin from behind lank curtains of hair. "We like audiences that, uh, sit down and listen to the music," he announces, "rather then, uh, get drunk and pick up girls." "Big ones," interjects Phil Collins. "Yuh, big ones," agrees Rutherford, to a chorus of giggles and another lazy grin.

In April 1972, Michael John Cloete Crawford Rutherford was 21 years old. "And there I was," he says now, "with long hair and a double-neck guitar, hanging out with Phil Collins and Tony Banks. When my father was 21, he was fighting a war and sinking the Bismarck."

The polarity between Mike Rutherford's life and that of his late father, Royal Navy Captain William Rutherford, is the thread that runs through his autobiography, *The Living Years*. It's a revealing account of his life and times in Genesis, spliced with extracts from his father's unpublished memoir about "an age of empire, of archdukes, emperors, and a map of the world that was coloured pink".

The Mike Rutherford that strolls into his management's Kensington office this December afternoon is a far cry from the 21-year-old in The Piper Club. The curtains of hair are long gone and the once boyish face is concealed behind the beard he's been wearing, in varying degrees of wooliness, since *Wind And Wuthering*. The 63-year-old Rutherford laughs easily but also exudes the same quietly posh, brisk air that runs through *The Living Years*.

The starting point for this memoir was the death of his father in October 1986. Genesis were on tour and Rutherford flew home from Chicago for the funeral, then straight back to play the LA Forum. The band were at the height of their global powers and there was no time to grieve. When his mother died in 1992, Rutherford moved three of his father's trunks into the attic above his studio, where they remained, unopened, until three years ago. By then, both Genesis and Rutherford's side-project band Mike + The Mechanics had come to an end. "I didn't want to open them before that," he says. "But I was having a slow writing day in the studio and just decided to do it."

In the first trunk he found his grandfather Nathaniel Rutherford's two books about life as an army doctor. In the other two were his father's papers and files, including his unpublished manuscript about his time in the navy.

"There was a rejection letter with the manuscript that said: 'Terribly sorry Mr Rutherford, but there isn't much demand for books about naval history in this day and age…' So there was a legacy there that I wanted to address. I wanted to see bits of my father's book in print."

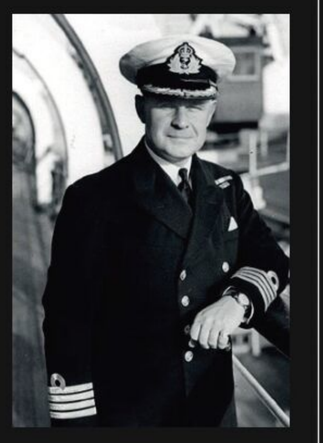
Part of what spurred Rutherford to write this memoir was the contrast between his life and his father's. "When you look at early photographs of us, it's like looking at the same person — prep school, the football team. Then suddenly our lives diverged."

The road to Genesis began when Mike Rutherford enrolled as a pupil at Charterhouse public school in Surrey in the summer of 1964. By then his parents had bought him a guitar and taken him to see Cliff Richard And The Shadows at the Manchester Apollo. The die was already cast.

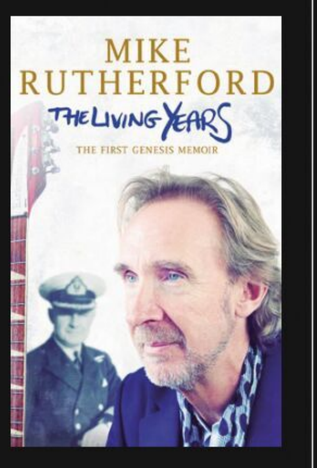
"I was born at just the right time," he explains. "My parents' generation were in shock and worn out after the war. Then along come The Beatles, the Stones and blue jeans. Suddenly young men had their own music and clothes, and didn't want to wear cavalry twills like their fathers. It was a huge social change and I was in the thick of it."

At Charterhouse, Rutherford met guitarist Anthony Phillips, and passed through two school groups, The Anon and The Climax, despite being banned from playing guitar by a housemaster who considered the instrument "a symbol of the revolution".

The Living Years is especially good at conveying what it was like growing



Mike's father, Captain William Rutherford, and *The Living Years*.



> "My relationship with my father was a little troubled but he was very supportive and came to shows. He tried to understand Genesis."

Fulham, December 14 2013: Mike Rutherford gleefully gets out the famous old double-neck for the *Prog* cameras.

> I had to have my septum operated on in the late 70s, but cocaine was simply taken as a way to keep you going on the road.

up in an English public school at a time when pop music was considered a subversive influence. "I try and explain this to my kids," says Rutherford, laughing. "They say they get what I'm talking about, but they don't. You cannot imagine the excitement of hearing a new Beatles record. After *Sgt Pepper* in 1967, it was a blank canvas – anything was possible."

By this point, Rutherford had become Charterhouse's resident rebel, if a rather genteel kind of rebel. He grew his hair, smoked cigarettes, puttered around the Surrey countryside on a Honda 50 in defiance of a school rule that banned pupils from owning a motorcycle, and skived off to see bands like The Nice and Cream at The Marquee. "I'd park the Honda at Guildford station, then get the milk train back from London at 5.30 in the morning."

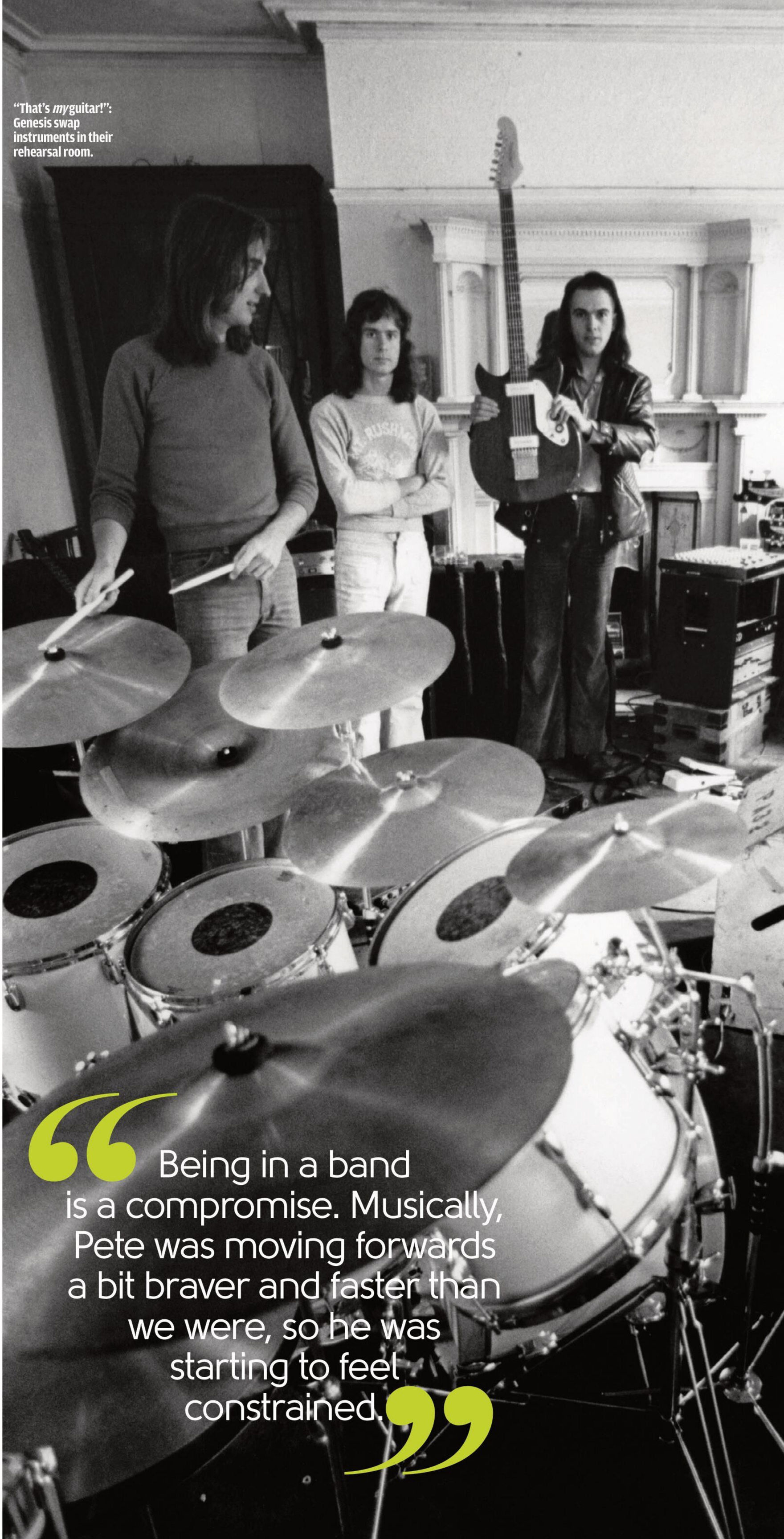
Genesis came together when Rutherford and Phillips met two older pupils playing in a group called Garden Wall. There was "edgy, nervy" piano player Tony Banks, and drummer, pianist and singer Peter Gabriel, a boy who "made his own hats and tie-dyed T-shirts in sinks".

With the patronage of former Charterhouse pupil-turned-producer Jonathan King, they changed their name to Genesis and recorded their debut album, *From Genesis To Revelation*, in August 1968. "We wanted to be original," writes Rutherford, "but Jonathan didn't like our sort of originality."

The album sank but, incredibly, Captain Rutherford allowed his son to pursue a career in music rather than take up a place at Edinburgh University. Rutherford Senior and the other band members' parents apparently donated £200 each to spend on musical equipment. It was a magnanimous gesture from fathers who must have wondered whether they'd just squandered an awful lot of money on their sons' education. There's a lovely scene in the book when a teenage Rutherford rocks up to his dad's gentlemen's club for a chat about his future, wearing mauve platform boots and an Afghan coat, which he hands to the club's appalled doorman.

"My relationship with my father was a little troubled in the early days," he admits. "But he was also incredibly supportive. It's hard to imagine how he must have viewed it because he had nothing to compare it to. We were the first generation of rock'n'roll musicians. It was like I was venturing off into the deep unknown. Later on, he and my mother used to turn up to lots of Genesis shows. He wanted to understand it."

Genesis spent winter 1969 in Christmas Cottage, a property owned



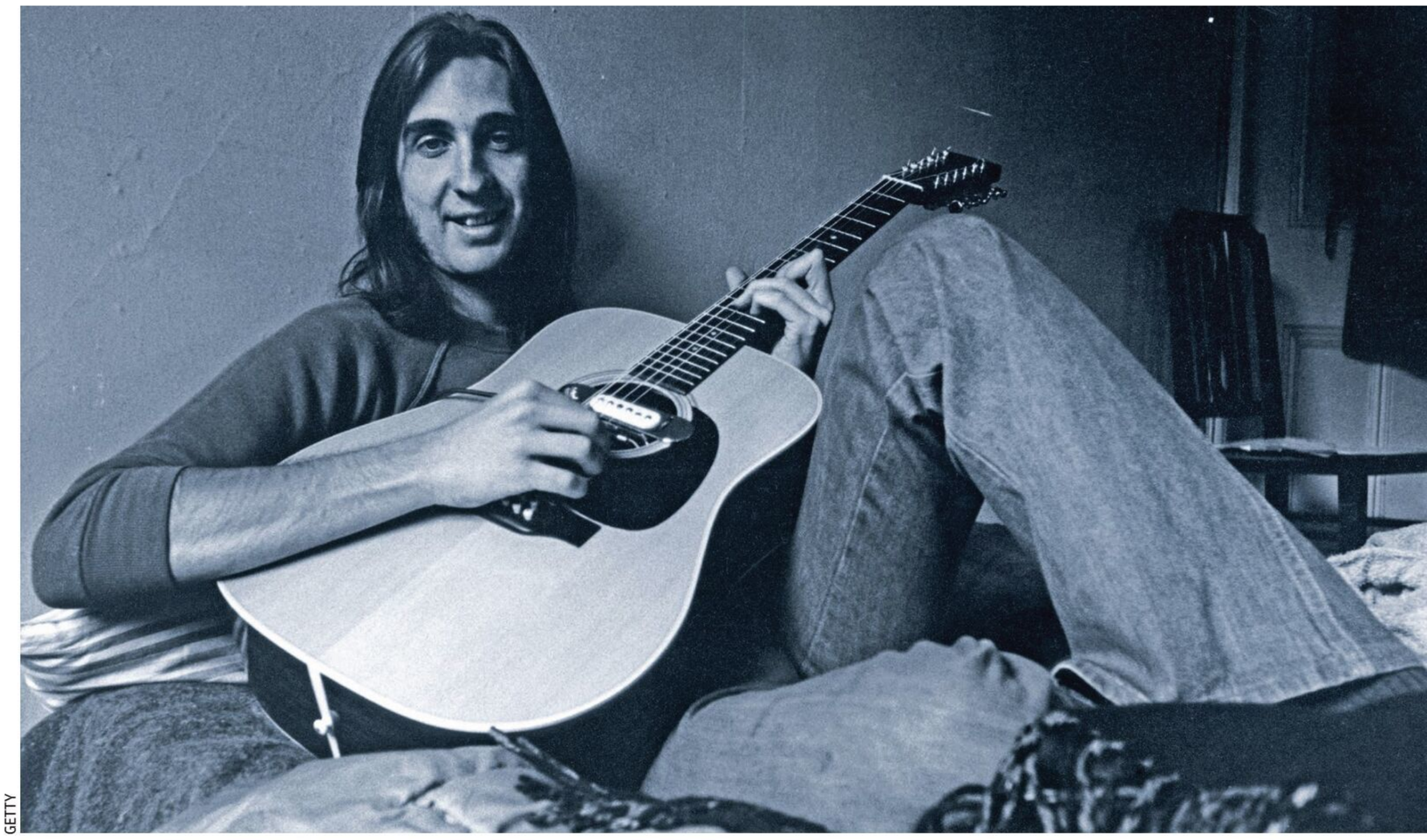
"That's *my* guitar!": Genesis swap instruments in their rehearsal room.

> "Being in a band is a compromise. Musically, Pete was moving forwards a bit braver and faster than we were, so he was starting to feel constrained."

by their friend and roadie Richard MacPhail, in Dorking, Surrey. According to *The Living Years*, best friends Gabriel and Banks bickered constantly, and drummer and carpenter John Mayhew was "better at carpentry than drumming". But it was here that they wrote most of what became the first proper Genesis album, *Trespass*.

Rutherford thinks the physical isolation helped them discover their sound. "Peter and Tony had carried *From Genesis To Revelation* – that was all them," he explains. "It wasn't until we spent six months in the cottage that we came together as a band. We had two LPs, *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, and a Moody Blues one; *Days Of Future Passed*. That was all we had to listen to. Had we been in London and going out to see bands every night, we would have sounded different. Stuck in that cottage, there were no distractions. We were on our own."

The first album, *From Genesis To Revelation*.



Rutherford puts his feet up in the early 70s.

GETTY

But what Rutherford calls the "folky, fanciful" music of Genesis was a hard sell. It became harder still when Ant Phillips left. Genesis had signed to the forward-thinking Charisma Records label and had just released *Trespass*. Phillips' timing couldn't have been worse. "It was the biggest shock at the time," says Rutherford.

In the memoir, Phillips' departure seems to have been a bigger deal than even Peter Gabriel's four years later: "Ant had some sort of virus that really knocked him out. But he also had stage fright. That was the first thing I learned doing this book. I asked myself, why didn't we just say: 'Okay chaps, how about taking three months off?' We shouldn't have just let him leave. But we were too young and didn't know how to deal with it."

Rutherford portrays Phillips as the band's unsung hero: "I would like him to come across like that, because he *was* the unsung hero. He was the driving force of Genesis in those early days, and people really don't know that." That said: "Getting past the first person leaving was the hard bit. After that it became easier."

> "Anthony Phillips was the unsung hero. He was the driving force of Genesis in those early days."

The band hit their creative stride with 1970's *Trespass*.

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Captain Rutherford was a man who served his country and did his duty without question. His son shared his ability to make the best of any situation. Sent away to boarding school ("a world of dormitories and cold morning baths") at the age of seven, this tough regime continued at Charterhouse. Going from sleeping in a 'cube' ("a ceilingless cubicle which at least allowed privacy when masturbating") to a cramped tour bus was no great leap. "We'd been beaten down [at Charterhouse], and got used to living quite basically in a tough environment."

Double trouble: Rutherford with his twin-necked Rickenbacker at London's Drury Lane Theater.

> When I came back off tour, I used to go to the local pub and everyone ignored me.

GETTY

Rutherford and Gabriel performing live on the *Nursery Cryme* tour at the Paris Olympia in 1971.

VEUIGE/DALLE/ICONICPIX

> We were the first generation of rock'n'roll musicians. It was like I was venturing off into the deep unknown.

Rutherford, Gabriel and Banks were well equipped for life in Genesis.

Where the two non-Charterhouse band members fitted into all this becomes clear in *The Living Years*. Phil Collins replaced John Mayhew in 1970 and immediately lightened the mood. In fact, you can't get a bad word out of Rutherford about Collins: "Phil was very comfortable straight away. He had this upbeat, happy, joker element. He was so good for us."

However, Phillips' eventual replacement, Steve Hackett, had a tougher time. "I think it's no coincidence that the other guys found Steve when I was ill in bed with a stomach ulcer, because I probably would have tried to find another Anthony," Rutherford admits. "And that was not the right way to go. Once Steve came along, I enjoyed what he did, but I would *still* be saying: 'Not quite right there.'"

Hackett once told this writer that in Genesis's early days, he and Collins would watch Rutherford, Gabriel and Banks arguing, and believed that the root of those arguments was something that had happened in their schooldays. Rutherford admits that the rows were so bad that when Collins first witnessed one: "Phil was convinced the band was splitting up."

But he insists that their shared background kept them grounded. "Listen, when you've all been in shorts together, nobody can get away with any airs and graces."

Rutherford depicts Peter Gabriel as a gifted songwriter who drives his bandmates mad with his tardiness and dithering. But his anecdotes about Tony Banks are spikier. When Banks refuses to play an encore at an early gig in Hemel Hempstead, Rutherford threatens to hit him with a chair. "I then kicked him all the way back to the stage," he writes. Banks comes across in the book as a brilliant musician, but pernickety, unadventurous and incapable of writing hit songs.

"It's true," says Rutherford, grinning, "about the hit songs. He has a problem with words. Who else but Tony would use the words *'sheets of double glazing'* in a song [from *Domino*]?"

Is Banks likely to be offended?

And then there were three: Genesis' *Invisible Touch*-era line-up in 1986.

GETTY

"There are things I will say in front of strangers about Tony that I will happily say to his face with a certain tone," he replies. "But I know it can look harsh in print. I got [Genesis manager] Tony Smith to read the manuscript with that in mind. He took out a couple of digs at Tony. But it's not that bad. Tony can take it."

Has he sent his old bandmates copies of the book yet? "I sent one to Pete and Phil today. Not Tony yet, no," he adds, grinning. "I prefer to keep winding Tony up. I'm telling him: 'I don't want to send you a copy now and ruin your Christmas.'"

It was Rutherford, Banks, Gabriel, Collins and Hackett who recorded that run of imperial progressive rock albums, beginning with *Trespass* and ending with '74's *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. Rutherford writes fondly about the era, but isn't afraid to criticise: "*For Absent Friends* [on *Nursery Cryme*] was Phil and Steve's song, and I could have done without it on the record... *Watcher Of The Skies* [on *Foxtrot*] was a prime example of the fact that you can write great lyrics that read well but are hard to sing..."

Genesis devotees will find plenty of pub trivia to pick over in Rutherford's book. *Squonk* was, apparently, inspired by Led Zeppelin's *Kashmir*; Tony Banks was annoyed when Brian Eno played on *The Lamb...* as he thought fans might presume it was Eno playing all the keyboards; and Rutherford considers his own composition, the Gary Numan-inspired *Man Of Our Times*, the worst song on *Duke*.

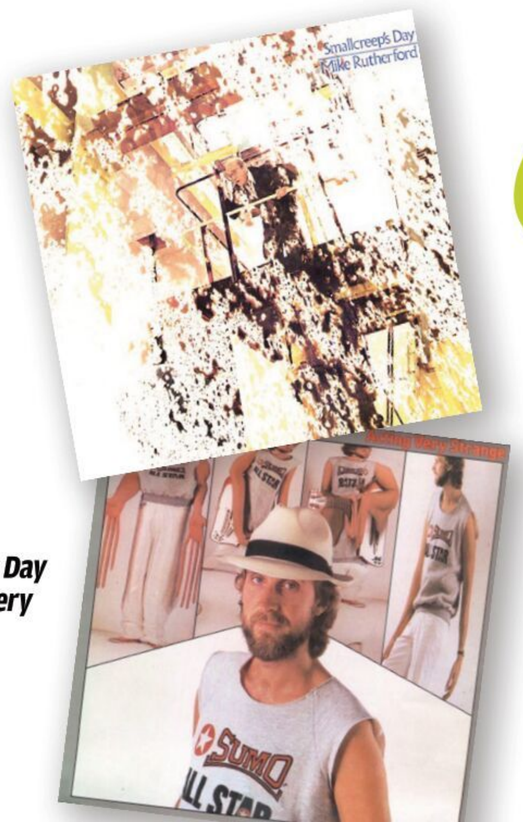
"*Supper's Ready* is still special," he says. "That's my favourite long Genesis piece. Writing this book, the more I thought about *Supper's Ready*, the more I realised that. But you can't keep doing *Supper's Ready* forever."

Rutherford also doesn't shy away from that fact that the early Genesis stagecraft left a lot to be desired. The problem was, most of the band, not just the audience, sat down. On one occasion, Rutherford nodded off on his stool. "I came round after a moment or two and looked about to see if anybody had clocked me — no one had."

Even Charisma's press officer once called the band "fucking boring". Ultimately, it was Peter Gabriel that brought Genesis's "folky, fanciful" music to life by painting his face and wearing increasingly outré costumes on stage. "And it worked," says Rutherford, "because suddenly we were on the cover of *Melody Maker*."

While Gabriel's ambition drove Genesis forward, it also drove him away from the band during the making of *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. It's the 40th anniversary of *The Lamb...* this year. There's a framed print of the album artwork hanging on the wall of the management's office. Rutherford glances up at it as he speaks.

"*The Lamb...*'s not a favourite of mine, but it's a brave album," he offers. "The trouble is, when you're in a band, your opinion of an album is always



The two solo albums: *Smallcreep's Day* and *Acting Very Strange*.

> "I didn't realise until Phil left how much he was the musical glue between me and Tony."

coloured by the making of it. That one wasn't much fun. Pete left, then came back, then left after the tour. There's some stuff on that record that I'm very proud of, but it's a disturbed album."

In *The Living Years*, Rutherford expresses regret over Gabriel's departure, while admitting the rest of the band did nothing to prevent it. "Again, we could have said: 'Let's take three months off.' But, looking back, Pete was *always* going to leave."

Really? "Yes. Being in a band, any band, is a compromise. Musically, Pete was moving forwards a bit braver and faster than we were. So he was starting to feel constrained."

It seems that Captain Rutherford was more upset than his son about Gabriel leaving the band. "That Pete could jump ship made dad a bit angry."

But, once again, that old public-school stoicism came to the fore. "When Pete left, we thought: 'Oh fuck.' But then we thought: 'Look at all these songs written by me and Tony.' That was the problem – the audience thought Pete wrote all the songs. He didn't." The four-man Genesis kept writing songs: "However, we realised they could get a bit boring without any vocals."

Enter Phil Collins from behind the drum kit – though it took a little time for Rutherford to be convinced that he was the man for the job. At his first gig as lead vocalist (in London, Ontario, March '76) Phil arrived on stage holding a sheet of paper on which he'd written things to say to the audience in-between songs. His hands – and the paper – were shaking. "At that first show, there was a while when I was thinking: 'What the fuck is this?'" Rutherford admits. "Then, after about 40 minutes, I thought, 'This is gonna work.' But there was some trepidation."

The next album, 1976's *A Trick Of The Tail*, proved that Genesis could survive without Peter Gabriel. According to *The Living Years*, it was only now, after a six-year cycle of album, tour, album... that Rutherford came up for air and married his girlfriend, model Angie Downing. The two had been friends since they were 17. Why did it take so long? "We were away so much in Genesis and she was away so much as a model, the timing wasn't right."

In the 2008 Genesis documentary, *Come Rain Or Shine*, Mrs Rutherford complains that her husband is a "dreadful mumbler". Perhaps it's because the conversation has shifted from music to personal relationships, but Rutherford's having a bit of a mumble now. "Because we had been friends for so long, it's hard to become lovers," he says, explaining his Gabriel-style dithering. "So I had to choose

Garage Days

A well-oiled machine, or a spanner in the works? Life with **Mike + The Mechanics**...

Mike + The Mechanics in 2011 with vocalists Andrew Roachford and Tim Howard.

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Mike Rutherford formed Mike + The Mechanics in 1985 as another outlet for his songwriting, only for the band's debut single, *Silent Running (On Dangerous Ground)*, to become a pretty decent sized UK and US hit. "It was unbelievable," he says. "After Phil's success, the chances of me or Tony getting something off the ground seemed highly unlikely."

Fortune, though, played its part. Rutherford had drawn up a list of potential songwriters and got lucky with the first two, producer and former 70s sex-comedy actor Chris Neil (see *Adventures Of A Plumber's Mate* et al) and Glaswegian pop singer BA Robertson (of *Kool In The Kaftan* and *Bang Bang* fame).

The three wrote an album's worth of songs, before Rutherford cast around for a band. "Once again I got lucky, because the first two singers through the door were Paul Carrack and Paul Young."

Carrack sang the ballads; former Sad Café man Young handled the more rocky songs. From there on in, Mike + The Mechanics released five albums and enjoyed a run of Top 20 hits, including *The Living Years,* before Young's death from a heart attack in 2000.

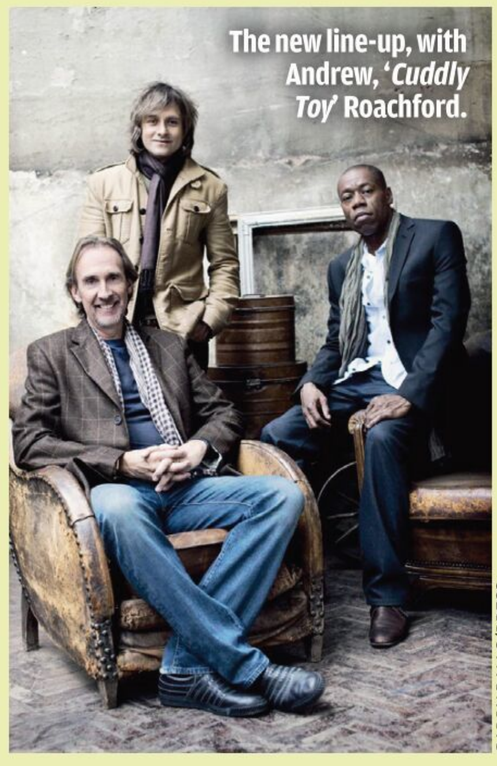
In contrast to the group's MOR image, Young was a bon vivant with a prodigious appetite for drugs and alcohol. In his memoir, Rutherford recalls Young ransacking his hotel room looking for booze and Angie Rutherford spiking his drink with a sleeping pill in a desperate attempt to calm him down. "I loved Young," says Rutherford, "although there were times when I could have killed him. But he had his demons and that was very much a part of his character."

Rutherford dissolved the band after 2004's unsatisfying album *Rewired*. "It wasn't a very good album and without Young, the chemistry had changed."

Yet in 2009, Rutherford began working with new musicians, including singer-songwriter Andrew Roachford (of the 1989 hit single *Cuddly Toy*), and writing songs that "sounded like Mechanics songs". Roachford apparently arrived at their first writing session thinking that working with Rutherford would be an intense experience.

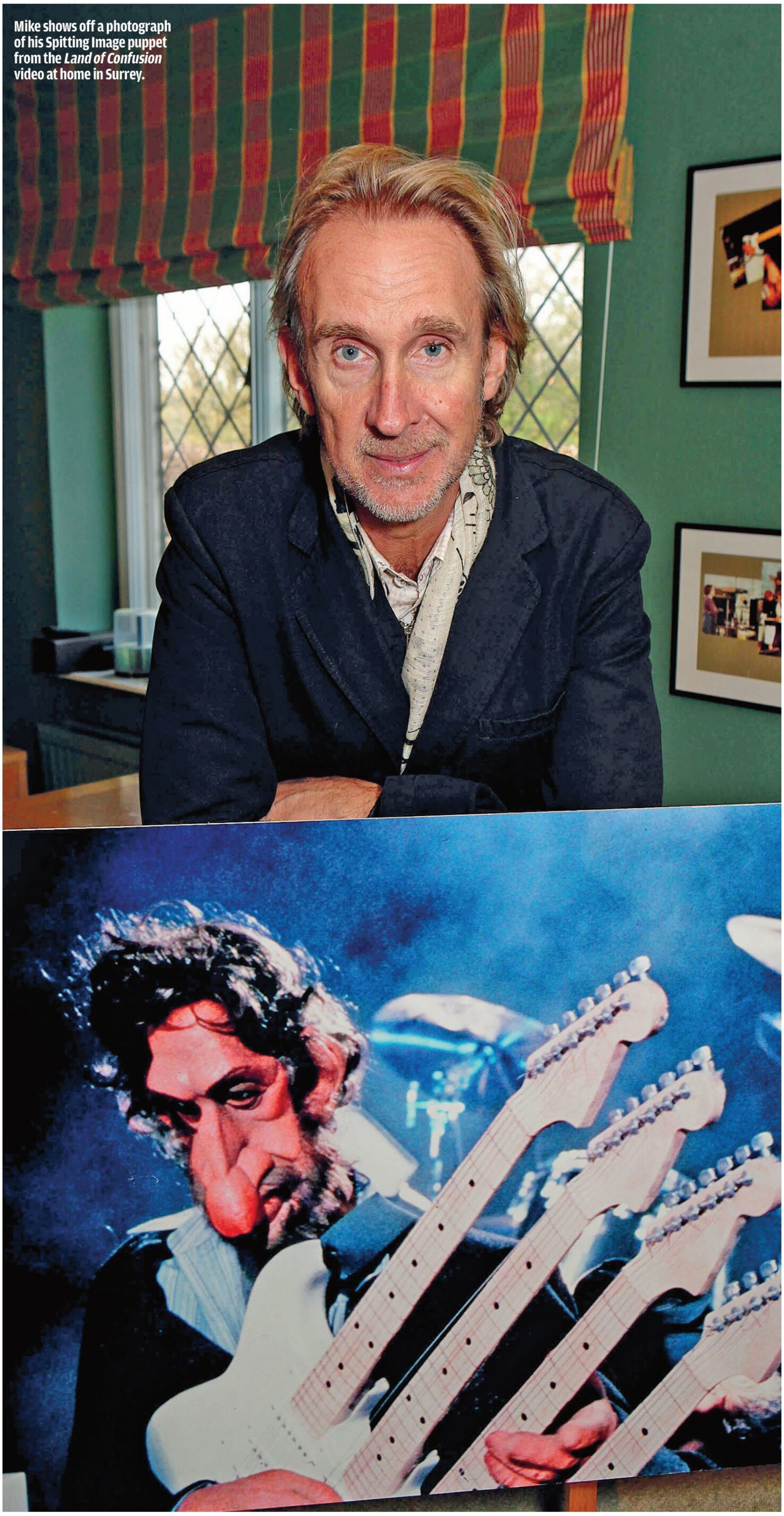
"He thought I was going to be like this," says Rutherford, furrowing his brow and adopting a pose like Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker*. "He was surprised when he found out that Genesis were never like that. We were never tortured artistes. Roachford was shocked to discover that we wrote songs by jamming like a jazz band. We play like a train smash, with lots of wrong notes, and something good comes of it. That's how Tony Banks and I always worked."

The revived Mike + The Mechanics now features Rutherford with vocalists Roachford and Tim Howar, and are back on tour in February. "These are great songs to play live," explains Rutherford. "It's different from Genesis because the songs are lighter and the audiences are probably lighter. But we do have an identity crisis, I know that. After the gigs we often have people come up to us and say: 'I knew every one of those songs but I had no idea they were all by Mike + The Mechanics.'" **MB**



The new line-up, with Andrew, '*Cuddly Toy*' Roachford.

PADDY BALLS/PRESS



Mike shows off a photograph of his Spitting Image puppet from the *Land of Confusion* video at home in Surrey.

REX FEATURES

my moment with Angie, because if it had gone wrong, that's everything fucked."

Before then, Rutherford had thoroughly enjoyed the perks of life in a touring rock band, though it had its pitfalls. In the book he recounts an incident in Pittsburgh on Genesis' 1974 tour, where he ends up drunk on Southern Comfort, naked from the waist down and blindfolded in his hotel room. Unfortunately, his female companion shuts his hand in the bathroom door, and Rutherford has to play the following night's gig with a splint on his fretting finger.

In fact, Genesis's staid image is shot down several times in Rutherford's memoir: "I read Keith Richards' book [*Life*], and there's no way I could compete with that," he says. "But we had our moments."

These moments include Rutherford getting busted at Heathrow Airport with a "huge bag of grass" he'd forgotten about in his luggage, and poor Angie getting strip-searched after customs officers find a joint her husband has absentmindedly left in her bag.

Did the drugs ever become a problem? Rutherford points to his nose. "I had to have my septum operated on in the late 70s," he says, matter-of-factly. "Yuh, you know, that bit in the middle of your nostrils."

Apparently several years of cocaine use had taken its toll on the membranes. "This was pre-social, though, pre-social," he insists. "Cocaine was simply taken as a way to keep you going on the road. Never by Tony or Pete, though."

In fact, Rutherford has a theory that the rock'n'roll lifestyle was never a problem for Genesis, simply because they were English. "It's true," he says. "Not many American bands last as long as English bands because they believe the dream, and someone's always telling them they're wonderful. When I came back off tour, I used to go to the local pub and everyone ignored me."

Rutherford's description of himself in his personal relationships as "a bit slow getting there emotionally" could easily apply to Genesis. With Phil Collins fronting the band, Genesis started to write about real life and real emotions, rather than man-eating plants and alien visitations.

A Trick Of The Tail's follow-up, *Wind & Wuthering*, included Rutherford's first love song, *Your Own Special Way*. Genesis were evolving, and Rutherford is well aware that not all of their audience were evolving with them. "I know that some punters felt a bit annoyed when we went from, say, *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed* to *Your Own Special Way*. But we couldn't keep

doing ...*Hogweed*. We weren't aiming anywhere, we were just travelling, and ...*Special Way* is where we ended up."

Steve Hackett walked out of Genesis in 1977 while they were mixing the live album, *Seconds Out*. In the book, Rutherford reveals that Hackett was absent for the first few days of writing for *A Trick Of The Tail*. By the time he arrived, the other three had come up with *Dance On A Volcano* and *Squonk* without him. Hackett had been busy with his first solo album, and Rutherford expresses some annoyance that he hadn't been keeping his best material for Genesis. But Hackett's departure is the one that Rutherford seems the most conflicted about.

"Steve needn't have left," he insists. "I could have seen Genesis staying as the four of us. I don't know why he left. Then I read some stuff in [the official Genesis biography] *Chapter And Verse* about how there were some things he wasn't happy about, and I thought: 'What a shame. I didn't know. Why didn't we talk about it?'"

But there was another problem besides poor communication: seven years on, Ant Phillips' replacement was still struggling to find his place as a songwriter. "There were already three songwriters in Genesis, and that was tough to break into," Rutherford admits. "We were three tough old motherfuckers."

That statement alone encapsulates Mike Rutherford's mindset. When he talks about Genesis, he's invariably referring to himself, Banks and Collins, even when discussing the old days. Both in conversation and in his memoir, it's obvious that the three-man Genesis is the one Rutherford most relates to. Not that this stopped him making records without the other two.

In 1981, Rutherford released his first solo album, *Smallcreep's Day*, based on Peter Currell Brown's novel about a bored factory worker. Were there parallels with his life in Genesis? "I liked the story, and there's always going to be a part of you that thinks: 'Is this *it*?' when you're in a group. We all made solo albums to further our musical knowledge, and it worked. We were stronger when we came back to the band."

Nevertheless Rutherford regrets his decision to sing lead vocals on his second solo release, 1982's *Acting Very Strange*. "It was something I had to do once, but never again." Apparently, Captain Rutherford heard the album and politely suggested his son "didn't give up the day job".

Genesis were in the middle of recording *Abacab* when Phil Collins'

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Now you see us: Genesis in Chicago during the *Invisible Touch* tour.

Banks By Numbers

More classical stuff on the way for **Tony**. And on Mike's book? "It's full of inacurracies, course...!"

Tony Banks, as we speak to him, has yet to finish reading *The Living Years* – the memoirs of a schoolfriend and bandmate of more than 50 years' standing. But for one reason or another he remains thoroughly entertained by its contents.

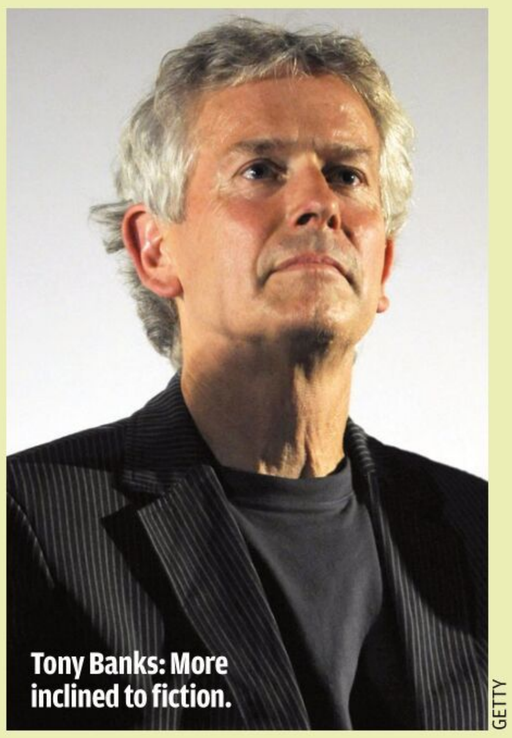
"My copy arrived yesterday so I'm around halfway through it", reveals the 63-year-old. "It's full of inaccuracies, of course, and Mike's not been particularly polite about me – but that's fair enough. It all makes for good reading."

It's said that there's a book inside all of us, although Banks, the Genesis keyboard player from 1967 onwards, is hardly bursting to write his own.

"I'd be more inclined towards fiction than an autobiography, actually. I just don't think that I'm interesting enough," he laughs. "It'll be fascinating to see how Mike's book does."

Since Genesis last performed in 2007, Banks has hardly been short on ways to pass the time. After teaming up with the City Of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra for his second classical album, *Six: Pieces For Orchestra* (released in the spring of '12) he was commissioned to compose an orchestral piece for the Cheltenham Music Festival, which takes place in July.

"It's pretty much written," he reveals. "It's about 15 minutes



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Tony Banks: More inclined to fiction.

long and I'm quite pleased with the demo. It has a touch of the old Genesis feel about it, combined with the intensity of mood of an orchestra."

Banks will be in the crowd like everyone else when the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra unveils his piece. "I expect that'll be quite weird and nerve wracking," he predicts. "I love the sound of an orchestra and I wouldn't want to move the focus [onto me] by involving a piano."

Like the other ex-members, Banks was surprised by Phil Collins' recent upbeat comments about the possibility of maybe one day playing with Genesis again.

"Even so, I won't hold my breath," Tony responds. "At one point it looked like Phil would never play again, but being the kind of guy he is, nothing would surprise me. He might well get it all together again, who knows?

"Mike and I felt we only did half a tour [in 2007]; the idea was always to do more," he continues. "We were slightly surprised by the response to the two shows we did do [at Old Trafford and Twickenham]. We'd been quite tense, not knowing how things would go. Maybe we'd like to do a bit more, especially in England, but ultimately nobody's getting any younger."

The clock is most certainly ticking on the possibility of a Genesis reunion. And yet when one considers that Peter Gabriel and Phil Collins both refuse to rule out such a possibility, Mike Rutherford tells us: "There's nothing planned but who knows?" and Steve Hackett has toured the songs concerned for the last few years, the odds must be encouraging?

"I find it hard to believe that Peter would want to do anything with us again, only because he's moved on," comments Banks, choosing his words carefully. "All things considered it's not something that we'd totally rule out but it would have to make practical sense." **DL**

debut single *In The Air Tonight* came out in January 1981. Rutherford must have felt a twinge of jealousy. "Yeah," he says, laughing. "Number Four in the first week? Fortunately we were in the studio together, so we could talk to Phil about it. Had we not been, we might have found it harder to deal with."

Rutherford admits that Collins *might* have played him and Banks a demo of *In The Air...*, but that it probably didn't make an impression because "we were such chord snobs and it only had three chords". Today, though, he decides to blame Tony Banks. "I can imagine Tony dissing it," he adds mischievously, "and saying [slips into an eerily accurate Tony Banks impersonation]: 'What else you got? Come on.'"

For Rutherford, the Hugh Padgham-engineered *Abacab* was Genesis's breakthrough album: "Hugh helped to make us sound as powerful in the studio as we did live." But tracks such as the "sonically bizarre" *Who Dunnit?* proved too much for some. Rutherford writes about the band playing the song in Holland and getting booed by a "bunch of old Dutch hippies".

But Rutherford regards the first vinyl side of the follow-up, 1983's *Genesis*, as the band at their peak. "After [1980's] *Duke* we'd got into a bit of a rut," says Rutherford, "On *Genesis* we went back to the band writing together again, and that's when it works best."

There were long songs to appease the old Dutch hippies (*Home By The Sea*, *Second Home By The Sea*) and the

> *Supper's Ready* is still special. That's my favourite long Genesis piece. But you can't keep doing *Supper's Ready* forever.

Rutherford didn't much like the cover to *Genesis*. But it could have been worse!

sonically bizarre hit single *Mama*, which was apparently inspired by hip-hop pioneers Grandmaster Flash's *The Message*. It's obvious Rutherford still loves that album. The only fly in the ointment was the sleeve. "Crap cover!" he exclaims. "But the best of a bad lot. You should have seen the other suggestions. Awful."

With 1986's UK and US Top 5 album *Invisible Touch*, Genesis became MTV darlings and global superstars. Rutherford spent these years wearing a loud shirt, leather trousers and a light perm, zooming between time zones on Concorde. According to the book, everyone in Genesis became slightly disconnected during this period, especially the once happy-go-lucky Phil Collins, who developed an on-tour ritual of obsessively re-packaging his designer T-shirts in their cellophane wrappers after each wash. "I'm sure it was a coping mechanism," Rutherford writes.

But Rutherford doesn't explore Genesis' stadium years in half as much detail as what's gone before. "Once you get into that big arena touring in the 80s and 90s, there's less to say."

By then, Rutherford had also carved out a successful side career with his own group Mike + The Mechanics. *The Living Years* gives more space to the Mechanics than it does to the Genesis of *We Can't Dance*, or their swansong album, *Calling All Stations*.

When Phil Collins finally left Genesis in 1996, Rutherford and Banks battened down the hatches again, and hired Ray Wilson, the then 28-year-old vocalist with hard-rock band Stiltskin. But the subsequent album and tour sold relatively poorly.

"There was no glue," says Rutherford. "I didn't realise until Phil left how much he was the musical glue between me and Tony. Ray wasn't a writer, and I think if we'd wanted to carry on Genesis we would have needed to find another writer."

Banks wanted to continue, but Rutherford couldn't face "three or four years of album, tour, album..." to re-establish Genesis: "I felt the hill was too high to climb."

Although Genesis ended with less of a bang, more of a whimper, Rutherford, Banks and Collins reunited for a tour in 2007. Rutherford and Banks thought they were re-forming the five-man line-up, but when they sat down for a band meeting, they discovered that the ever-dithering Peter Gabriel was only there to "discuss discussing the tour we might be going to do". Exit Gabriel, quickly followed by Steve Hackett. Once again, the "three tough old motherfuckers" were the last men standing. "The weird thing is, when you put Phil, Tony and me in a room, we are the band again."

In February Rutherford heads back on the road with Mike + The Mechanics. Could it be a precursor to a Genesis reunion? "I can't see us making another album," Rutherford says. But in August last year, he Banks and Collins met for dinner. "So I'd never say never to playing live again."

Writing *The Living Years* could have been Rutherford's way of drawing a line under his musical career, but it seems it isn't. Not yet, anyway. "You can't necessarily retire from music," he says emphatically. "If you're going to retire, you have to have a back-up plan."

Prog's photographer has now arrived, and Rutherford points to a large black case on the floor outside the office. "See that?" he says, "I've got the old double-neck Rickenbacker in there for when we do the pictures."

And with that, he's up, rubbing his hands together excitedly and striding off towards the door. Suddenly Mike Rutherford almost looks 21 again.

Genesis Reunited?

Mike tackles the question that won't retire...

In November 2013, Peter Gabriel told *Rolling Stone* magazine that the idea of a reunion with his old bandmates in Genesis has "never been ruled out" and that "looking back at other bands of our generation, there's usually one or two missing now. So you do get a sense of the clock."

Gabriel was responding to comments Phil Collins had made to the German newspaper *Bild Am Sonntag* that he was considering playing some shows again, "maybe even with Genesis".

Collins' comments came as a particular surprise. In 2011, after the release of his soul covers album, *Going Back*, he announced his retirement from music, claiming that nerve damage and a dislocated vertebrae had made it too difficult for him to play drums again.

While Rutherford was unaware of Gabriel's comments ("Why? What's he been saying?"), he admits that Collins "has beaten me to it" by revealing that he'd consider reforming Genesis again.

"There's nothing planned," he insists. "But who knows? Tony and I met up with Phil in August last year for dinner, and it was great to see him again. He's doing really well. The 2007 tour was great fun and it would have been nice to do more."

The Genesis tour documentary, *Come Rain Or Shine*, didn't stint from showing the problems Collins faced at the time. Unlike his still-married bandmates, he had recently divorced his third wife. The singer was shown leaving press conferences and band meetings early to catch flights back to his adopted home in Geneva, so he could spend time with his two young sons, Nicholas and Matthew. These family commitments, coupled with the news of his health problems, scuppered any notion of further Genesis concerts.

So what's changed? "Phil had been a bit down these last couple of years," admits Rutherford. "He got a bit depressed. What's good now is that he's living in New York, his girlfriend is there, it's a buzzy place and he's got his own studio. Phil's got far too much music in him not to do something else.

"What I've learned from doing this book is the importance of friendship. I don't see the guys very much any more, but the friendship doesn't just go away. We've all been through too much together. We've all had those experiences with each other, so you can pick up where you left off very easily.

"Tony, Phil and I could write a new album in three months. That's the easy part – the writing," he reveals. "It's what comes after that, that's the hard part. But if Phil goes back on tour with his own band then I think that will get him back into it, and who knows what might happen after that?" **MB**

His father's son: Mike found his sea legs in music. He's still sailing on...

> I can't see us making another Genesis album, but I'd never say never to playing live again.

Afterglow

The epic story of Genesis, Part 2

The departure of Peter Gabriel was supposed to spell the end for Genesis. Instead – thanks to their new, reluctant frontman – they survived punk, defined 80s rock, and became one of the biggest and uncoolest bands of all time.

Words: **Chris Roberts** Portrait: **Michael Putland**

The first post-Gabriel touring line-up. Clockwise from top: Rutherford, Collins, Banks, Hackett and guest drummer Bill Bruford.

"I've been a big Genesis fan ever since the release of their 1980 album *Duke*. Before that I really didn't understand any of their work. Too artsy, too intellectual."
Patrick Bateman in the 1991 novel American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis.

In the 80s, it's safe to say, Genesis changed.

"I do feel the strain," confides Phil Collins, "because it's said so many times that: 'The pre-Collins era was the true Genesis', and: 'It all fucked up when he started singing.' Because, really, we *all* changed. If you stay together as a band, what you wear changes, what you think changes, what you listen to changes, and what you want to do changes. It was a group decision. Well, not even a decision – a metamorphosis.

"Sometimes, when people say: 'Oh, the early-70s period was better', that's because their lives were different in the early 70s. It's nostalgia for that particular girlfriend or that particular place they lived. It was always on the band's to-do list to have hit singles, to be played on the radio. Even before I joined, that was the premise of the band. I think we got better at knowing when to stop, and when to say, okay, this song sounds great just like this."

In 1975 the band's lengthy search for a replacement lead singer after Peter Gabriel departed ended with the post being filled in-house. Phil Collins stepped up to the microphone, still playing drums live during instrumental passages. It worked. Their 1976 album *A Trick Of The Tail* and the following year's *Wind And Wuthering*, the first two of the post-Gabriel era, remain among the band's best. Genesis had grasped the nettle, and seized victory and longevity from the jaws of fizzling out. They nearly hadn't, though.

"I remember being in Peter's hotel room in Manchester when he told me he was going to leave," Collins recalls 36 years later. "It didn't occur to me that we'd find someone else, I just thought we'd carry on. But my idea of being a four-piece instrumental band went out of the window pretty much that same day. Tony [Banks, keyboards] and Mike [Rutherford, bassist] said: 'Don't be ridiculous. We need a singer, because we're songwriters.' They didn't really sing live, and I'd sung all the back-up vocals. Peter and I had become a sort of… Chas & Dave or whatever, and I'd been his stooge on stage. So it became my job to teach the songs to the guys coming to audition. And I always sounded better than them."

Who decided that?

"Well, I didn't. This wasn't something that had entered my head. *A Trick Of The Tail* was written, and we went into the studio and still didn't have anybody. We had one guy that we thought might be okay. He came in to sing *Squonk*, and it wasn't good. To give the guy credit, nobody in the band had even asked him what key he preferred, if it was too high. We just wrote the music in the key it sounded best in. It was the same with me after I became the singer. No one ever took any notice of what my range was, I had to make do with whatever we'd written.

"So this poor guy left, and we all looked at each other and I said: 'Well, let me have a go. I think I might be able to do this one.' I was going to sing a couple of the lighter songs anyway, but nobody knew if I had the balls to sing the heavier stuff. We did it, and it sounded okay. And one by one we just went through it, ticking the songs off the list. As far as I was concerned we'd finished the album, but we still didn't have a singer. I figured we'd find someone; the album would come out and it would be what it was. In those days, that was sacrosanct – your record was the Holy Grail. What you did live was… as best you could. So we had another half-hearted attempt at finding a singer, but… "

Guitarist Steve Hackett has said he'd pitched his tent 'firmly in the Phil camp', after you'd sung on

Unquiet slumbers: the post-Gabriel line-up in all their glory.

his *Voyage Of The Acolyte* solo album (1975), and that he and Jon Anderson of Yes encouraged you at your first wedding.

"I've read that my first wife suggested I did it, which is quite possible. I may have gone in and said: 'Well, I guess I'm going to have to do it, as long as I can find a drummer I like.' And that's when Bill Bruford came into the picture. But I don't think anybody thought I'd be able to pull it off. Least of all me."

"He had a lovely voice," Tony Banks says of Collins. "He'd obviously done plenty on previous albums. But we weren't sure he'd *want* to do it – he was the drummer, after all. And at the time, he didn't seem to have… the gravitas. But he sounded great. Which meant we had a more difficult decision, in many ways, regarding the live shows, because now we had to look for a drummer as well. So it was two changes where only one had been needed."

"It was a tall order to ask somebody with real talent to come in and pick up my odds and ends," says Collins. "I was playing on the records, and also on stage when I wasn't singing, so to offer a job as a hired hand isn't normally going to make a great drummer jump up and down with happiness. Bill had played percussion in Brand X with me. We were rehearsing in Shepherd's Bush one afternoon and he said: 'Why don't you ask me?' He'd been in this area before [musically], with Yes and King Crimson, so he'd be friendly fire to the fans, but I didn't think he'd do it. For him it was a transitional period, a holding area. Fantastic drummer, but very stubborn and single-minded. I don't know how happy a time it was for him, but he did it. Then he left and we found Chester Thompson. Bill got us over the bridge."

> **"I do remember saying: 'Okay, I'll give it a go, but don't expect me to put on the costumes.'**
> **Phil Collins on becoming the frontman**

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Did you get the sense that Genesis fans wanted you to succeed after Peter Gabriel left?

"Coming from our underdog position, when nobody expected anything, *A Trick Of The Tail* was a bright light. Yes, they wanted the band to survive. And they preferred that we'd made it work within ourselves."

Can you remember the first gigs where you were front and centre, in March 1976?

"Vividly!" Collins laughs. "Canada, because it was always strong for us. London, Ontario was the first show, then Kitchener. For me it was: 'What do I wear? What do I *do*?' I had big shoes to fill. I had the goodwill of the audience, but not the security blanket of my drums. Y'know, I could sing, but could I talk? Once we'd got a couple of songs out of the way at the first show, I felt: 'I can do this.' But it took me years to take the microphone off the stand. It became my drum kit, to hide behind."

Your cloak of invisibility?

"Yes. Taking the microphone off its stand was what *singers* did. I wasn't ready for that."

The vocal transition may have worked perfectly, but you were certainly a contrast to Peter Gabriel visually. He'd had such a theatrical persona, whereas you were the definition of unpretentious.

"It wasn't something I thought about. I do remember saying: 'Okay, I'll give it a go, but don't expect me to put on the costumes.' Which is funny, as I was the one that had come from an acting background. It wasn't a conscious decision to not do what Peter did, I just didn't feel I could pull it off. So I became the guy next door. If you don't put on costumes, you just stand there and sing. And that's what I did."

"In some respects that helped us," adds Mike Rutherford. "You couldn't carry on Peter's mystique. I mean, it's not in Phil's nature. With his character on stage, lightening things between the darker songs, it helped the balance of the shows."

After attending the band's Hammersmith Odeon gig, Gabriel said: "I felt more at ease than I expected to. Except that I got some twitches during *Supper's Ready*. It looked like someone else dressed up in my entrails."

Collins has recalled: "Peter said: 'You sing *Supper's Ready* and *Carpet Crawlers* better than I do, but you'll never sing them *like* I do.' I know I sing it better than he does, but when he sings it it's with more understanding."

"We were lucky in a way," remarks Tony Banks. "Despite what anybody might think of it now, *The Lamb Lies Down*, quite a difficult double album, sold less than [it's predecessor] *Selling England By The Pound*. We were in debt. So we were able now [with *A Trick Of The Tail*] to come out with something more direct. *Dance On A Volcano* is a very arresting beginning to an album. It gets you in there. Then

you have strong choruses like *Ripples*… It was a good place to be."

"We'd started writing, and things just happened from the first day," recalls Rutherford. "After two or three weeks we thought, this feels strong, feels good. It gave us the confidence to carry on. Phil singing happened in a very natural way, no forced pressure. And it wasn't a whole new persona coming in. The audience liked that he was quite a character, but was one of us, one of them. We knew after half an hour in Canada that this was going to work. You don't look for change, but when it happens it gives you a restart."

Thus re-booted, the new Genesis saw *A Trick Of The Tail* – a winning, well-judged blend of yearning melodies (the title track, *Ripples*…), poignant narratives (*Mad Man Moon*), and mesmeric, velveteen sound-beds (*Entangled*) – sell well on both sides of the Atlantic. Left to their own devices, the quartet had got it very right. The next album, the melancholy *Wind And Wuthering*, consolidated the new line-up and sound, with tracks like *One For The Vine, Your Own Special Way* and *Afterglow* refracting the old, epic grandeur through accessible shapes. The lyrics on both albums referenced a homeland both recognisable and mythologised – '*a muddy pitch in Newcastle*', '*dark and grey, an English film, the Wednesday play/We always watch the Queen on Christmas Day*' – which its residents love/hate. You could still escape into Genesis, but now you'd sometimes glimpse signposts from reality.

"It's not one of my favourites", Rutherford says of *Wind And Wuthering*. "It lacked balls, for me."

"There's a character about it," counters Banks.

Steve Hackett decided it was his final Genesis album, and left the band as the live album, *Seconds Out*, was being mixed. "I didn't leave because I was unhappy with the band's music, I left because I was frustrated in my own ability to create a musical world of my own," he told journalist David Buckley.

"Sometimes Steve would come in with stuff that we didn't really like," admits Collins.

"It was kind of weird, Steve's leaving," Rutherford says. "I don't really know why he did. We were mixing the live album, and Phil passed him in Wardour Street. They nodded, said: 'Hi. See you in a bit.' Then Steve didn't come in like he was meant to. It was an odd moment. A group needs a certain amount of communal energy to get a career on the road. You've got to get established before you do other projects outside it. Steve had made a move into solo work, which was fine, but he wanted to carry on with that. Not long after, we felt we *had* got established to the point where we could do solo stuff. So it came to him too early, I suppose. I took on the guitar role. I'm not a lead player of Steve's calibre but, again, because we're songwriting-driven, I was probably okay."

And then there were three…

"Records became very easy to make then," says Banks. "Although on [the next album] *And Then There Were Three* I did feel the lack of a guitarist who was fluent, as Mike was still learning at that point. Steve had his own character, which the album missed."

"I don't think it's great," says Rutherford. *Follow You Follow Me* turned out rather well, though. A nice little pop song, but not too sugary. I don't know why it works but it does."

Released as a single in March 1978, *Follow You Follow Me* gave Genesis their first UK Top 10 hit, their breakthrough into regular singles radio play.

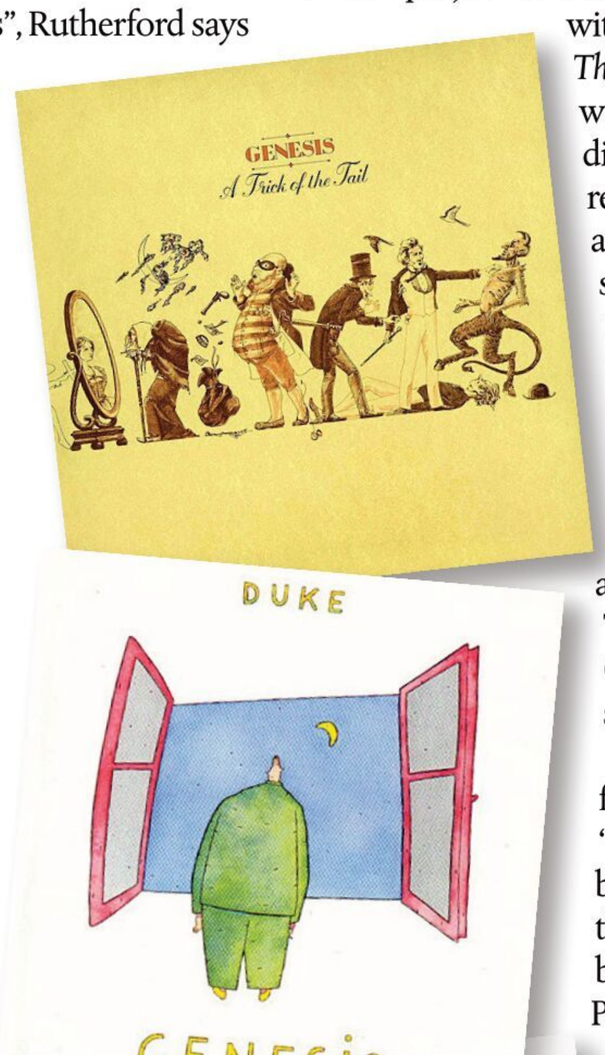
"That album coincided with my marriage breaking up," Collins remembers, "so really the writing there went between Tony and Mike. I wrote a few lyrics. I was preoccupied with other parts of my life, nothing to do with music."

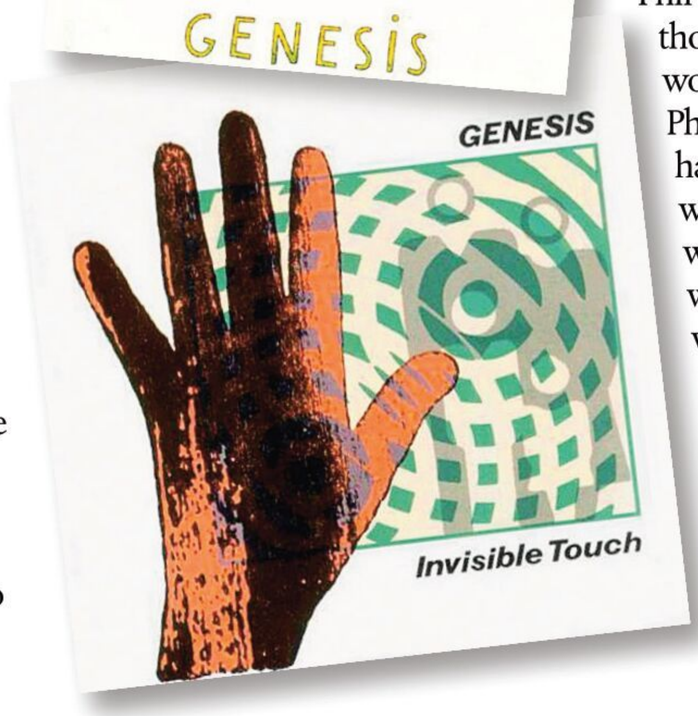
With Genesis now officially hit-makers, the three members felt they could venture securely into solo projects. Soon Banks and Rutherford were releasing albums (Banks first, with *A Curious Feeling* in '79, Rutherford with *Smallcreep's Day* in '80; he would also later launch Mike + The Mechanics in '85), while Collins worked on a little side-project album called *Face Value*, which opened with an understated song called *In The Air Tonight*. The songs he wrote were inspired by his divorce, live drums were largely replaced with programmed ones, and he brought in a horn section. The album, released in 1981, went on to sell five million in the US, and go five-times platinum in the UK and 10-times platinum in Canada. The 'drummer's solo project' became, unexpectedly, an international phenomenon. The shape, scale and feel of Genesis would never be the same.

"The two things cross-fertilised a bit," explains Banks. "The problem was that having briefly escaped from the feeling that we were Peter's backing band, suddenly there we were: Phil's backing band. But I thought, what the hell. It would've been very difficult if Phil – or Peter, anyone – had had that kind of success when we were 21, but by then we were more like 31 and it was easier to take. We just went, ah, okay. It changed a lot of things. Phil, in a sense, had been the junior member of the group. By the end of all that stuff everyone was very much equal. I think we all benefited from it. We did get very good at writing hit singles."

"We were one of the few bands who made it work," Rutherford says of solo sabbaticals in general. "It probably kept us going a lot longer, because we had a great variety. After you'd been on your own, being responsible for a whole album, it made us appreciate each other. Because we'd been together since we were young men, there weren't really egos within the band situation. Phil, having had huge solo success, came back to the band as it was before. He should be given more credit."

Before 1980's *Duke* gave Genesis their first No.1 album and *Face Value* made an unlikely superstar of Collins, there had been this awkward phenomenon called punk rock. It spat and roared that all the old established,





THE VIDEOS

The 1980s and the art of wacky Genesis promo videos.

Huge globally throughout the 80s, Genesis – now light years away now from the likes of *The Musical Box* – were becoming well-known to their newer audience for their humorous videos for tracks such as *I Can't Dance* and *Jesus He Knows Me*. The *Land Of Confusion* video, a commentary on the cold war, featuring *Spitting Image* puppets (including one of Ronald Reagan dressed as Superman), was commissioned by Phil Collins after he'd enjoyed the show's spoof of himself. It was nominated for the MTV Video Of The Year award in 1987, but lost out to, of all things, Peter Gabriel's *Sledgehammer*.

"We were lucky having Phil, because he's good on screen," says Tony Banks, "so he could do a bit of that. Whereas Mike and I… Ha! Well, particularly me. Very uncomfortable in front of the camera. I enjoyed it if we could just fool around. *Illegal Alien* was great fun. Most of ours were tongue-in-cheek. Videos are funny little things, really. Their importance is out of proportion."

Mike Rutherford adds: "Before MTV, if you didn't go and play in Detroit three times in three years, Detroit wouldn't know you. With the introduction of MTV, suddenly you'd be famous all round the world for one song. A hit single is so high-profile, it would dominate people's perception of us. The album might have 15-minute songs on, which were great on stage, but they'd be overshadowed. Our music lends itself to visual interpretation. When it works well it's fantastic, when it doesn't it's horrible."

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indulgent dinosaurs must be swept away to make way for the new, three-minute, three-chord, all-rage anti-aesthetic. The careers of many of Genesis's peers suffered, never to fully recover, with musical proficiency labelled showy, and flights of fantasy thrown out with the bombastic bath water. Yet, somehow, Genesis survived again. In fact they grew bigger than ever. Further proof that in the peculiar case of this quietly strange band the normal rules do not apply. How did they avoid being razed to the ground?

"I think we were out of the country," Rutherford answers blithely. "Because I don't remember it happening. Of course, I knew it was going on, but I didn't really *feel* it. Around '76/'77 we did a huge tour, and then you don't really follow England so intensely, or not as much as people who were here all the time. I was aware of it, and it was no bad thing, actually."

Did it affect your thinking at all?

"By then we were too far down our own musical road. Also, we'd already rather simplified from the likes of *Supper's Ready* to shorter songs. We'd made a big change, we'd moved along."

"We'd adapted, become more straightforward, and that suited the times better," says Banks. "It felt natural to us not to keep on doing complicated pieces and reprises and all the rest of it."

"Being on tour such a lot," says Collins, "we weren't around to witness punk. We knew what was going on because we read the music papers, but didn't feel too affected by it. I actually remember thinking, 'Good – a lot of these bands I don't like either will just disappear!' I wasn't a big fan of most of the bands who suffered anyway."

Were you aware that you were suddenly proclaimed unfashionable?

"I think we were disliked by some, yes. But it's like that John Cleese accountant sketch: 'You're perfectly boring, you're perfectly normal, you're perfectly suited to being an accountant.' Cleese had an accountant's meeting the following day, and suddenly realised this had been on television. So he went to his accountant and said: 'Did you see the show?' 'Oh yes,' said the accountant. Cleese said: 'Ah. I'm ever so sorry about that.' The accountant said: 'No, not at all. You see, I'm a *chartered* accountant.' To me it was like: 'Oh, they're not talking about *us*, they're talking about those virtuoso bands.' We write songs, we're not in that group. Although obviously a certain element of what we did was what they were trying to get rid of."

As *Duke* showed, Genesis had done their own, voluntary curtailing and culling in time for the 80s. In fact what had originally been envisaged as a 30-minute suite of songs (including *Duchess* and hit single *Turn It On Again*) was separated into individual tracks. Meanwhile, *Misunderstanding* gave the band their first US Top 20 hit.

"I always say *Duke* is my favourite," says Banks. "There's something optimistic about that album, which I love. The way it starts. Bang! You're in. That's when we really gelled as a three-piece."

"I was out with the mist with *Duke*," says Collins, who made up for not being fully focused on its predecessor. "We rehearsed at my house while I was writing *Face Value*, too. We became more the band we used to be, writing stuff out of thin air, just from a guitar riff or a drum machine pattern or whatever. Working stuff up from scratch. And that became the way we continued.

> **"It felt natural to us not to keep on doing complicated pieces and reprises and all the rest of it."**
> **Tony Banks**

Because by that point I had a solo career."

Indeed he did. After *Duke*, every subsequent Genesis album was perceived and judged differently. Phil Collins became one of the best-selling solo artists in the world, but continued to record and tour with Genesis until 1996, 16 years and four albums later. How did he manage to combine the two?

"Well, it's what I did," he shrugs. "By this time I was married for the second time and we didn't have kids, although I had two from my first marriage and they came out on the road with us. On top of all this I got offered things where I couldn't believe my luck. I'd be sitting at home and the phone would go and it'd be Robert Plant. I was living not far from Eric Clapton, and we became friends through John Martyn. Suddenly he calls me one day and asks me to produce his album. How could I refuse? I was being asked to play by the people I grew up listening to. I'd think: 'I probably won't get asked again,' so…

"There was one year, '87 I think, when…"

When Genesis became the first band to play four consecutive sold-out nights at Wembley Stadium?

"Yes. We had three weeks off after that tour and then I went on the road with Eric. And, you see, by the time we did a Genesis tour and went around the world and back, I'd feel I could do an album again. Or I'd do the same thing and tour with my album, and then it'd be time for a Genesis record."

Did the lines between Phil Collins albums and Genesis albums ever get blurred?

"No. The way we'd developed, from *Duke* onwards, we all had outlets for our individual material. Rather than, say, Tony coming in and us learning his song the way he wanted us to play it, he'd do it as he wanted it done on his own album. Some of my things would never have had so much space if I'd put them in with Genesis. It's a question of growing up and knowing what you want to do. And in the end I left the band after I'd done the album *Both Sides*, where I played absolutely everything. Because I thought: 'I don't know if I can go back now.'"

And then there were three: this stripped-down line up saw the band's biggest successes.

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> **"I'd come into the business to write pop songs. When it all fitted together, I'd feel a sense of satisfaction."**
> **Tony Banks**

The end for Genesis wasn't nigh yet, though. As if to show there were no hard feelings between frontmen old and new, in 1982 there was a one-off reunion performance with Gabriel and Hackett at a muddy Milton Keynes Bowl, under the moniker Six Of The Best. It was arranged (hastily) to raise funds for Gabriel's WOMAD project, which was then struggling financially.

Karma thus ensured, Genesis, with Collins now (against all odds) a household name, spent the rest of the 80s growing absurdly big. *Abacab* ('81), *Genesis* ('83) and *Invisible Touch* ('86) outdid each other, before *We Can't Dance* ('91) saw the final hurrah of the Collins/Banks/Rutherford line-up. The first of those, another UK No.1, was self-produced and another watershed. Recording it, they discarded an entire album's worth of material as they thought they were becoming, in Rutherford's words, "a caricature of ourselves". With evangelical new-wave-era zeal, they threw out any songs that sounded like anything they'd done before. It firmed up their move towards radio-friendly pop-meets-AOR, although the albums generally still featured concessions to longer-form structures. As Collins had done on *Face Value*, they used Earth, Wind & Fire's horn section – an unthinkable move to fans of Genesis albums like, say, *Nursery Cryme* or *The Lamb*. Even the album's title was the polar opposite of the fantasies-and-fables days of yore. Rutherford told an American radio show: "There were three bits of music in *Abacab*, and we referred to them as Section A, Section B and Section C. At different times, they were in different order… and at one point it spelled 'ABACAB'. On the final version, it wasn't that at all, it's more like 'ACCAABBAAC'."

Rolling Stone magazine praised the band for dropping their "ivory-tower artistry" and embracing "highly rhythmic interplay" and pop hooks, and compared Genesis to The Police and XTC. "Truly modern art rock," said another review.

Thus the new incarnation was encouraged and confirmed. The music became increasingly clinical, ruthless, effective, *80s*. Topical issues were sometimes touched on, and the dreamy meanderings of the past were gone. *Genesis* (the band members all refer to it as 'the *Mama* album') included *Mama* (concerning an obsession with a prostitute, and inspired by David Niven's autobiography), *That's All* and *Home By The Sea*, and was another No.1. *Invisible Touch* was by far the biggest album of their career, selling more than 15 million copies worldwide and birthing no less than five US Top 5 hits, with the title track giving them their only No.1 single. In *American Psycho*, the serial killer Patrick Bateman calls it their "undisputed masterpiece. It's an epic meditation on intangibility. It deepens and enriches the meaning of the preceding three albums… Listen to the brilliant ensemble playing… you can practically hear every nuance of every instrument." Satirist or not, he wasn't their worst critic. As Collins has said: "In the later years there were people coming to our concerts who didn't know I played drums."

After a hiatus, Genesis reconvened in 1991 for their fourteenth – and what would be their final – studio album, *We Can't Dance*. "For me," says Collins, "we sounded really good on that album." Inevitably it was huge in both the UK and the US. The trio stress again that this wasn't a case of chart-magnet Collins imposing hits upon the others.

"I can understand why people might assume so," Banks says, "but it really did come from all three of us. The emphasis changed.

"Once, maybe, Steve and I had wanted to steer it a little more left-field, but after Steve left I lost that bit; I was quite happy. I'd come into the business to write pop songs. When we got it right, when it all fitted together, like on *Land Of Confusion*, I'd feel

A field of their own: Collins, Rutherford and Banks enter the 80s.

a sense of satisfaction. And we were still able to do more ambitious pieces, like *Domino* or *Tonight Tonight Tonight*. The live show was still perhaps heavier than the records."

Genesis's early-90s live album *The Way We Walk* divided the tracks into separate volumes: 'the shorts' and 'the longs'. It was all a far cry from the trippy days of *'Me, I'm just a lawnmower, you can tell me by the way I walk…'*

When Phil Collins did cut the cord, it was down to geographical, not musical, differences. He recalls: "We met at [manager] Tony Smith's house and sat round the kitchen table, and I said: 'Well, I gotta go, guys.' And they said: 'Okay, fair enough. We're surprised you stayed as long as you did.' Which I thought was fantastic. When they actually announced it, they said: 'After 25 years, we've decided he's not the right guy.' They had a wonderful attitude towards the whole thing. Then they said they were going to carry on, and I was pleased as punch, because the music touches so many people who have no control over it."

It was the end of an era. Did you feel in any way sentimental about it?

"I felt some relief," says Collins. "You do get into a situation where you're a slave to the band. 'Slave' is probably the wrong word.

"I remember a conversation after my first marriage broke up, and Tony and Mike said: 'Well if you'd just told us, we'd have cancelled some things.' And I wouldn't have thought of that! Because this was our *job*. I didn't want to let the guys down. Or the roadies. At the same time, my life had pulled me to Switzerland, and I didn't see at the time how we could carry on. I was becoming far more independent. The more you find yourself, the harder it becomes to sing other people's thoughts."

And you'd had so much validation as a writer at that stage of your career.

"But I've always erred on the insecure side, I must admit. That might sound difficult to believe, because I've been very lucky with the success rate of what I've done. Still, if there's 100 people in the room and one guy doesn't like it, I'm more interested in why that guy doesn't like it than why the other 99 do. So I end up whipping and questioning myself. But I've had a charmed life, which Genesis has been a huge part of. We wouldn't be sitting here talking if it wasn't for Genesis."

And so the glory years wound down. There was nothing left to prove, yet Banks and Rutherford brought in Ray Wilson (formerly of Stiltskin) as vocalist, along with other musicians, and released 1997's *Calling All Stations* album. Sales were, by Genesis standards, disappointing. And while one imagines nothing would irk Banks and Rutherford more than it being described as a footnote to the Genesis saga, that's what it was. "It didn't do badly, but not as well as one hoped, so it has a slightly tainted feeling with me," says Banks. "And having to cancel an American tour was frustrating. The audiences that came to shows enjoyed it, but it was difficult to persuade them to come."

Over the next decade, Genesis reconvened only for various archive box-set launches. In 1999 the 'classic' line-up of Collins, Banks, Rutherford, Gabriel and Hackett re-recorded *Carpet Crawlers* for a compilation. That might have been that. But in 2007 there came the Turn It On Again reunion tour. At first the idea had been to gather the 70s line-up with Gabriel and Hackett to perform *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. When Gabriel couldn't commit, Collins, Banks and Rutherford thought it would be more appropriate to bring back Chester Thompson and Daryl Stuermer (who, respectively, had played drums and guitar/bass live with Genesis after Gabriel and Hackett left, right up until Collins left) from the later era. Hackett had no problem with this.

"Peter was actually the one who'd suggested doing *The Lamb*," reveals Banks. "We gave that serious thought, because we'd assumed he'd be the difficult one. But then he did become the difficult one. And I can't blame him. Did he really want to go back into a situation where we all have an opinion? Phil is obviously more used to it, we have an easy relationship.

"It was a lovely tour to do. I enjoyed it. I was sad we didn't play more in England. We didn't know where we stood, to be honest. The group always got slightly strange press here, so we played it fairly safe, and played a lot in Germany, where we knew they liked us. It was a very ambitious show, and had to be financed that way."

"We weren't sure how it'd sell in England," agrees Rutherford. "Of course, we should have done more nights at Twickenham. That was a shame. We made a mistake there."

A free open-air concert at Rome's historic Circo Massimo drew an immense crowd, estimated at around half-a-million.

"It was a pretty bullet-proof show, even though torrential rain followed us around," Collins says of that tour. "It sounds corny, but it was fantastic to see parents telling their teenage kids: 'Now *this* is a band!' The fact that it was sold-out everywhere told us we were doing something that people still like to hear and don't see much of any more. It was hard work, to try to play like you did 30 years ago, on some things. And, basically, that was the tour that fucked me up as a player. I did my neck and my back and my arm. Somewhere, doing the

> **"The chance of getting either of our lead singers to do anything is pretty slim now."**
> **Mike Rutherford**

Turning it on again: the 2007 shows were a fitting swansong.

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drum duet, something waved a white flag and just gave in. And now I can't play any more."

You're definitely ruled out for good?

"Yes. I'm out of the whole thing. It's fun to talk about, but I've got my kids, and I've written a book about Texan history and the Alamo. No, I can't play now. A year ago, at the Prince's Trust thing, I did *Crossroads* with Eric [Clapton] and I just couldn't hold the sticks well enough. Really, I've done it all my life and it's no surprise I've run out of air miles. I remember on stage in LA, at the end of the last show, I told the guys, in front of the audience, that I loved them. It was my way of saying I can't do any more. We're great friends, and that's what's so nice in the end, when you've been with people for such a long time. It's been a great journey."

Genesis were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 2010 (Collins, Banks, Rutherford and Hackett attended, Gabriel was in rehearsals for a solo tour). Gabriel and Hackett both released albums in 2011. Rutherford maintains his Mechanics, but "of course I miss it. It was a powerful machine when that band kicked in. Being on stage was the most wonderful feeling." Banks loves writing, "so if the group's not available, I do it some other way". Collins has a place in history, along with Paul McCartney and Michael Jackson, as the only musicians ever to sell more than 100 million albums as a solo act and another 100 million as a member of a band.

"What's wrong with this picture?" he laughs. "Spot the odd one out. I had no idea until *Going Back*, my last album, came out. And of course that will always stay that way, because records don't sell those sort of figures any more."

Does it bother Genesis that they've never had the acclaim from the gatekeepers of criticism and cool that they must feel they've earned? (Particularly when you consider that there are more than 50 Genesis tribute bands in existence.)

"It's not a big thing, really," says Banks. "I am surprised, though, that we've slipped into this position – we had a *lot* of success at one point. No one minds being adored, do they? We didn't get press, we didn't get awards. We slip through the cracks somehow. The problem may be, a little, that Phil's star has done funny things, because of his solo career and life. It's perhaps affected how people perceive the group. Some people wouldn't know which were Phil tracks and which were late-Genesis tracks. But those earlier albums are starting to be thought of a little more kindly.

"I can't complain. I've had a fantastic career. And I can be on the Tube, go anywhere, live a totally normal life, so I think I get the best of both worlds. Besides," he adds, "never being cool meant we never had the problem of *suddenly* not being cool; we've *always* been just not very cool."

"Genesis was always a little ahead of the times," reckons Rutherford. "We just kept changing. And that was good for us, but maybe not for the Grammys. I heard someone refer to Take That as a 'heritage band' the other day. I thought: everything's relative. Also, because of the music's intensity, people always saw us as rather serious. Actually we had the most amazing fun, a huge laugh, living our lives."

"We started to get good reviews on the reunion tour," recollects Collins. "I'd forgotten what that was like! Because, you know, I've lived under this umbrella of abuse for many years now. But it feels like a few slates are being wiped clean, credit being given where due. And the body of work will be remembered, not what someone felt at the time. Forty years of Genesis – that's a lot of music. Bands don't last that long now because of the media environment. Everything burns out quicker."

In the words of an early song, '*the sands of time were eroded by the river of constant change*'. Or, in the words of a later one, '*that's all*'. Rumours still persist, even despite Collins's injury. Will Genesis ever play together again?

"The chance of getting either of our lead singers to do anything is pretty slim now." Rutherford says. "My stock answer is: 'Never say never.' But there are no plans."

Collins confirms that, after an operation in 2009 to repair dislocated vertebrae in his neck, he's counting himself out. "There isn't any 'drama' regarding my 'disability'," he told the Genesis website. "After a successful operation on my neck, my hands still can't function normally. I am not in any 'distressed' state; stuff happens in life."

Today he says: "My younger kids have just discovered what dad did. They listen to Genesis in the car. And it's only when they listen to it that I do. It reminds me of the van breaking down on the way to gigs. Obviously that was in the early days, and not in the last 30 years. It was all experience and it's all worth remembering. But as far as I'm concerned, I don't do that any more. Maybe I'll do the autobiography next."

Genesis

Turn It On Again

Deceptively straightforward but with a rhythmic banana skin – even Peter Gabriel slipped on it – this song began Genesis's transformation from major cult band to stadium-filling hitmakers.

Words: **Mark Blake**

On a cold, wet night in October 1982, the 'classic' line-up of Genesis reunited for a one-off concert at Milton Keynes Bowl. The show had been organised to raise money for their former lead vocalist, Peter Gabriel, who was facing financial ruin after the failure of the first WOMAD festival, of which he'd been the organiser.

Genesis's set that night consisted mostly of songs from Gabriel's time with the group. However, the modern Genesis (now just a trio of vocalist/drummer Phil Collins, keyboard player Tony Banks and bassist/guitarist Mike Rutherford) had scored a big hit in the summer of 1980 with *Turn It On Again*. So although the Milton Keynes show was a celebration of Genesis in all their 70s prog-rock glory, it would have been churlish not to play it.

Gabriel agreed to swap places with Collins while he sang the big hit. Gabriel could play drums – and, after all, how difficult was it to play drums on one of Genesis's pop songs? As it turned out, more difficult than Gabriel had imagined.

"It was typical Peter: 'Oh, I can play this,'" Tony Banks says now. "But once he started playing, he kept looking around going: 'Oh fuck!' *Turn It On Again* does funny things; it's truly a Genesis song."

What Gabriel hadn't realised was that the song was in 13/8 time. "Which made it like a merry-go-round," Rutherford recalled. "Peter would think he'd got to the end, and suddenly we would be off again."

When Collins succeeded Gabriel as lead vocalist in 1975, the band's music began to change. Gabriel had sung about extraterrestrial invasions and man-eating plants; on Collins's watch, the songs slowly started to address more human emotions. When guitarist Steve Hackett quit in 1977, Genesis were down to a trio, but scored their biggest hit single yet with a simple love song, *Follow You, Follow Me*.

Collins's influence on his bandmates was obvious. "Phil's songs had a lovely sense of space and ease," said Rutherford. "Phil was always able to let a song breathe."

This encouraged Rutherford and Banks to think differently as songwriters. One result was *Turn It On Again*, the song that turned Genesis from a successful cult rock band into a worldwide hit singles act.

The song began life in the summer of 1979 at Collins's house in Surrey. The singer's marriage to his wife Andrea had just broken up and she'd taken their children to live in Vancouver. Collins turned two of the bedrooms into studio-cum-rehearsal spaces and invited his bandmates to move in while they wrote their next album, *Duke*.

Turn It On Again was constructed from two separate musical ideas. "Mike had the riff," explains Banks, "and I had the bit in the song that goes: *'I can show you, I can show you…'* Both were rejects from our solo albums." (Banks's *A Curious Feeling* had just been released; Rutherford's *Smallcreep's Day* would follow in February 1980.)

Collins listened to Rutherford's riff and suggested they speed it up. "The original riff was very fat and heavy and slow," recalls Banks. "As soon as Phil sped it up, it sounded much rockier."

Initially, though, the riff was intended as a bridge between some of the new album's longer songs. "We already had *Behind The Lines*, *Duke's Travels* and *Duke's End*, and thought it would fit in there, until we realised it was too good to use as a link. Our solution was to play the riff twice, stick my bit on the end and then write a song around it."

"Making *Turn It On Again* and *Duke* was a happy time for Mike and I," Banks adds. "But Phil was in the throes of a very painful divorce."

"I was living on my own… things had gone off the rails a bit, drinking too much," Collins said in 2007. "But I have very fond memories of those rehearsal days."

With his wife and kids gone, Collins had thrown himself into his work with Genesis and anyone else who'd have him. Earlier that year he'd recorded with jazz-fusion side project Brand X and singer-songwriter John Martyn, and put together some ideas for what would become his first solo album, 1981's *Face Value*.

Rutherford wrote *Turn It On Again*'s lyrics – a prescient tale of a man who becomes so obsessed with watching TV that he starts to confuse it with real life – but Collins imbued it with his personality. "*Duke* was the first album where Phil started to sound like a real singer," said Banks.

Rutherford had originally written the song's riff on bass pedals, using an echo for every other note as it was too tiring to play. But when it came to recording the song, at Stockholm's Polar Studios in the winter of '79, he wanted to do it properly. Rutherford sat on the studio floor, thumping the pedal with his fist: "And when I got tired, Phil took over."

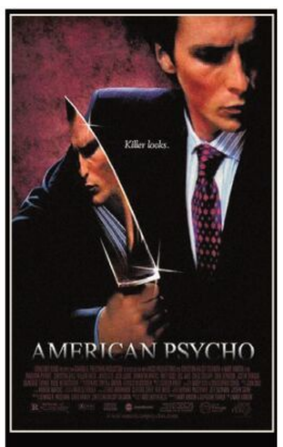
Their shared bass pedal thumping resulted in what *Rolling Stone* magazine later called "vibrant rock'n'roll", and a radio-friendly pop song. Yet despite its memorable hook and chorus, *Turn It On Again* was a Trojan horse – listen closer and you could hear the quirky Genesis of old in its offbeat rhythm.

"You can't dance or clap along to it because of that time signature. When we play it live, you can see the audience getting caught out."

The single was released on March 8, 1980, spent six weeks in the UK chart and finally reached No.8. *Duke*, meanwhile, gave Genesis their first No.1 album. "It caught us all by surprise," Banks admits. "But it's such a great song. And *Duke* is one of my favourite Genesis albums."

From here on, Genesis slowly moved out of the prog-rock shadows and into the world's stadiums. *Turn It On Again* would become a fixture of every Genesis show thereafter. There's just one problem, as Peter Gabriel learned to his cost. "You can't dance or clap along to it," cautions Banks, "because of that time signature. When we play it live, you can always see the audience getting caught out."

You have been warned.



IN TOO DEEP? Genesis's music acquired a new notoriety after the 2000 film adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's 1991 novel *American Psycho*. In the novel, Manhattan businessman/serial killer Patrick Bateman talks about his love of Genesis and names *Turn It On Again* as a personal favourite. In the film, Bateman, played by Christian Bale, even delivers a monologue about the band. "I've been a big Genesis fan ever since the release of their 1980 album *Duke*," he explains. "Before that I really didn't understand any of their work. Too artsy, too intellectual."

LEAD: GETTY

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
March 8, 1980

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.8

PERSONNEL
Tony Banks
Keyboards, backing vocals
Phil Collins
Drums, percussion, lead vocals
Mike Rutherford
Guitars, bass pedals

WRITTEN BY
Tony Banks, Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford

PRODUCERS
Genesis, David Hentschel

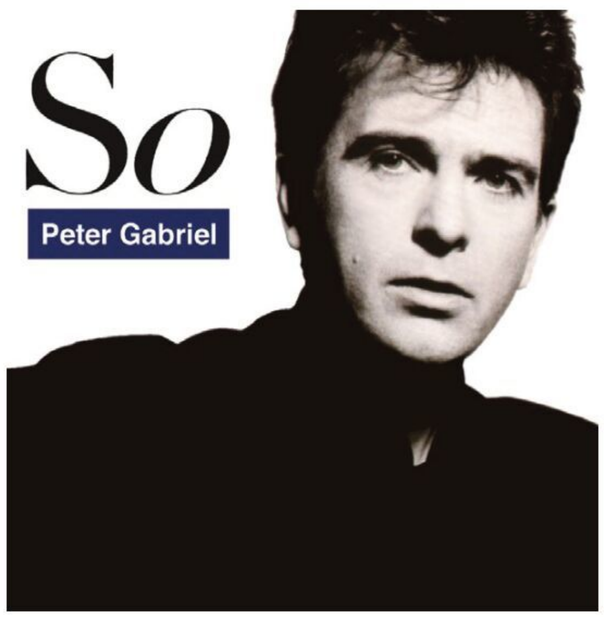
LABEL
Charisma

So

In the 10 years since leaving Genesis, **Peter Gabriel** had established himself as a bespoke solo artist, exploring a variety of styles, from all-out rock to minimalism and a new term – 'world music'. Now armed with some memorable tunes and a lot of plasticine, he fleetingly became a world superstar.

Words: Daryl Easlea

SO	
RELEASE DATE	May 1986
CHART POSITION	UK Album Chart Number 1 US Album Chart Number 2
BAND MEMBERS	Peter Gabriel, Daniel Lanois, David Rhodes, Tony Levin, Manu Katché, Jerry Marotta, Chris Hughes, Stewart Copeland, Wayne Jackson, Mark Rivera, PP Arnold, Coral Gordon, Dee Lewis, Richard Tee, Simon Clark, Kate Bush, L Shankar, Larry Klein, Youssou N'Dour, Michael Been, Ronnie Bright, Djalma Correa, Jimmy Brawlower, Bill Laswell, Nile Rodgers, Laurie Anderson
TRACKLISTING	*Red Rain, Sledgehammer, Don't Give Up, That Voice Again, In Your Eyes, Mercy Street, Big Time, We Do What We're Told (Milgram's 37), This Is The Picture (Excellent Birds)*
STAND-OUT TRACKS	*In Your Eyes, Sledgehammer, Don't Give Up*



Gabriel on the This Way Up tour in 1987.

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In 1986, Peter Gabriel released his fifth studio album, *So*, a record of high commercial values that chimed perfectly with its era. It appeared he had junked all of his progressive past and wrapped everything in a commercial sheen. Although *So* came in a glossy, Peter Saville-designed sleeve featuring an unambiguous portrait of Gabriel, and the album tapped into the nascent worldwide CD phenomenon, on closer inspection, it's still a progressive rock album at heart. With its references to literature, art, science, imaginary characters and, frequently present in Gabriel's work, having a good old fumble, combined with virtuoso musicianship, *So* is very much business as usual.

Sessions for the album began at Gabriel's Ashcombe House studio in Bath (or 'Shabby Road', as it had been christened during his fourth album, also known as *Security*) in early 1985. Although Nile Rodgers and Bill Laswell had been considered to produce, Gabriel chose to record with Canadian Daniel Lanois, with whom he'd worked on the soundtrack to the film *Birdy*. Accompanied by guitarist David Rhodes, the three quickly dubbed themselves the Three Stooges and crafted the basic tracks for the album.

"By having just the three of us, we had this 'turning up for work' kind of humour: we'd wear these construction-worker hard hats," Lanois said in his autobiography.

By not involving other musicians immediately, Gabriel, in theory, could head down fewer cul-de-sacs, as had become the norm on *Security*, which had taken 18 months to record. Lanois was aware of Gabriel's love of a distraction and attempted to keep him on track. *So*, of course, went to the wire with Gabriel's customary reticence in providing final lyrics, much to the frustration of Lanois. In order for Gabriel to finish the record, Lanois actually nailed him inside the barn at his house to complete the words.

Within a year, the album was ready, bristling with top-drawer musicianship (Stewart Copeland, Youssou N'Dour and Nile Rodgers all took part) and a surfeit of ideas. The opening *Red Rain* is dark and brooding, designed to 'crash open at the front'. Its lyrical themes came from Gabriel's on-off concept Mozo, about a wandering stranger. It's based loosely on the medieval work *Aurora Consurgens*, full of alchemical, religious and apocalyptic imagery, attributed to St Thomas Aquinas. Gabriel was enthralled with the idea of Mozo, a Moses-like character, who had appeared in glimpses in his previous solo work. 'Red Rain' came from a dream that Gabriel had of a big, red sea being divided, and glass bottles shaped like humans filling up with blood. Although it was new, full of shiny 80s modernism, it seemed as if Gabriel from 1974 was talking, rather than the new, lean, handsome heartthrob he'd become.

It was *Sledgehammer*, of course, that was to change the course of Gabriel's career. It presented him as a child in a sweet shop, dabbling in all manner of sexual innuendo. Working with his first love, soul music (just listen to the early Genesis demos for glimpses of prog-soul), the song was a celebration of life that stunned the listener on first hearing.

For once, Gabriel had produced a straight-out-of-the-box, unbelievably catchy hit single. After its wonderful false beginning, where the E-mu Emulator II shakuhachi bamboo flute sound (that seemingly was then placed on virtually every record that followed it) drops away, it sets up the dirtiest, greasiest horn break. It confounded expectations. The song sounded like the future, a time capsule of the most up-to date production available in 1986.

"Karl Bartos told me that when Kraftwerk were making *Electric Café* they went into the Power Station where Gabriel was doing overdubs on *So* and *Sledgehammer* was put on," Kraftwerk biographer David Buckley said. "They were knocked back by how fantastic it sounded. They felt their record was puny sonically by comparison, even though it's a completely different genre of music."

An evocative ballad, *Don't Give Up* was partially inspired by the startlingly evocative Dorothea Lange pictures

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> “***So*** **was the end of the idea of me being a sort of cult artist at the fringes of the mainstream, especially in America. There wasn’t an option to hide in the shadows any more.”**
> ***Peter Gabriel***

On the up: Peter dreams of the big time.

Shabby road: Gabriel at work in his Bath studio.

GETTY

> **"Kraftwerk were knocked back by how fantastic it sounded. They felt their record was puny sonically by comparison, even though it's a completely different genre of music."**
> **Kraftwerk biographer *David Buckley***

of Americans during the Great Depression. Written as a duet, Gabriel initially envisioned Dolly Parton to sing with him. Instead he turned to his great friend, Kate Bush, who was then enjoying huge commercial success in the wake of *Hounds Of Love*, to add the impassioned female vocal part. Over the gentle swell of Richard Tee's gospel-influenced piano part, the song was a masterpiece of understatement that was in step with the straightened times lurking beneath the shiny veneer of the era.

***Don't Give Up* features Kate Bush (below), although Gabriel originally intended to sing it with Dolly Parton (below left).**

REX FEATURES

REX FEATURES

Don't Give Up is arguably Gabriel's most powerful statement. In 1981, Margaret Thatcher's Employment Secretary Norman Tebbit infamously used an analogy about his father being out of work in the 30s, and instead of rioting, he got on his bike and looked for work. This became interpreted popularly as telling the unemployed to 'get on their bike' to find a job. Gabriel's tale of a dispirited man at the end of his tether looking for work touched a raw nerve with millions of listeners in the UK and, latterly, the world. The song, with Gabriel's despair in the verses and Bush's words of hope in the chorus, has gone on to be arguably Gabriel's most loved composition.

After such high drama, *That Voice Again* is a beautiful, Byrds-like pop song that often gets overlooked amid the album's plentiful highlights. Originally entitled *First Stone*, it sounds almost as if Gabriel had taped one of the therapy sessions that he had been going through. Musically, it's relatively simplistic, with Rhodes playing jangling Rickenbacker over the rhythm section of drummer Manu Katché and bassist Tony Levin.

Mercy Street was another standout. Gabriel had been reading the work of American poet Anne Sexton after having become interested in her work through the book *To Bedlam And Part Way Back*. Sexton had committed suicide at the age of 45 in 1974, leaving a slender yet highly confessional body of work, and the gentle, lilting rhythm of Gabriel's song supports lyrics that allude to this. Percussion for the track was recorded by Gabriel in Rio de Janeiro by seasoned player Djalma Correa. With its deeply reflective tone and affecting vocal, *Mercy Street* became one of Gabriel's most popular numbers and a staple of his live set.

Big Time was a sardonic reflection on the music business. It takes the opposite viewpoint of the Jacob character in *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*; it was time, after all, to try for that future in the fire-escape trade. Gabriel wrote the lyrics examining the dichotomy of his character, and perhaps realising it was fame he craved after all. The track was an obvious choice for a later single from the album in the UK, and the second single in the US, where it reached Number 8. Clean cut and funky, this was clearly how the States liked their Gabriel.

We Do What We're Told (Milgram's 37) had been around for a considerable period, originally recorded as far back as 1980's *Melt* and seriously in the running for 1982's *Security*. As it is, it sounds like the last link with that era. Strange, undercooked and difficult, it was about Professor Stanley Milgram's social psychology experiment from 1961: volunteers

"It takes him a long time to write his albums - his projects can take years!"

Tarja Turunen on why Peter Gabriel's projects are 'so' worth waiting for...

"I'm a huge fan of music from the 80s, and a huge fan of Peter Gabriel. I covered *Darkness* [from 2002's *Up*] on my new album [*Colours In The Dark*]. I just love him dearly: *Peter Gabriel*, *So* and all these crazy albums over his career... And as an artist, he's had a huge effect on me and my art. I'm fascinated by the thought process that goes into writing his songs. It takes him a long time to write his albums, which I really respect. His projects can take years!

"With *So* he made the clearest, cleanest album of his life. The music was direct and very commercial - the cover is a reflection of that - but it was still a wonderful album. He still experimented with different sounds, and had his bass player at the forefront as always, playing with different moods and percussion.

"I met him - I was like a little girl! I felt so small and unimportant. I was working on my first album and I was in a studio in Dublin and he had a concert there. It was a rainy day - I remember it like yesterday - and he was in these Wellington boots, walking around outside. His show was going to be outside, and it was a really bad day for weather. He was there with his family and I got to meet him backstage. He even asked me where I was from and what I was doing and I got to really talk to him. I was so happy!" **LB**

assessing how far they would be prepared to follow an authority figure, even if it was in complete opposition to their conscience or their views. Gabriel explored how people are conditioned to believe in dictators and support war. With its patter of Jerry Marotta's processed drums and L Shankar's squalls of violin, and two overdubbed guitar tracks by Rhodes, it's a disquieting interlude, proving to Gabriel's new-found audience that it was still within his power to unsettle.

This Is The Picture (Excellent Birds) was adapted from the track Gabriel had written with Laurie Anderson for her *Mister Heartbreak* album. On it, he worked again with Nile Rodgers.

"I recorded my part in New York," Rodgers recalled. "In those days I was gigging, and that was the height of my life. Sometimes it's hard for me to remember what studio, what work, where I was. I loved that sound that Daniel got."

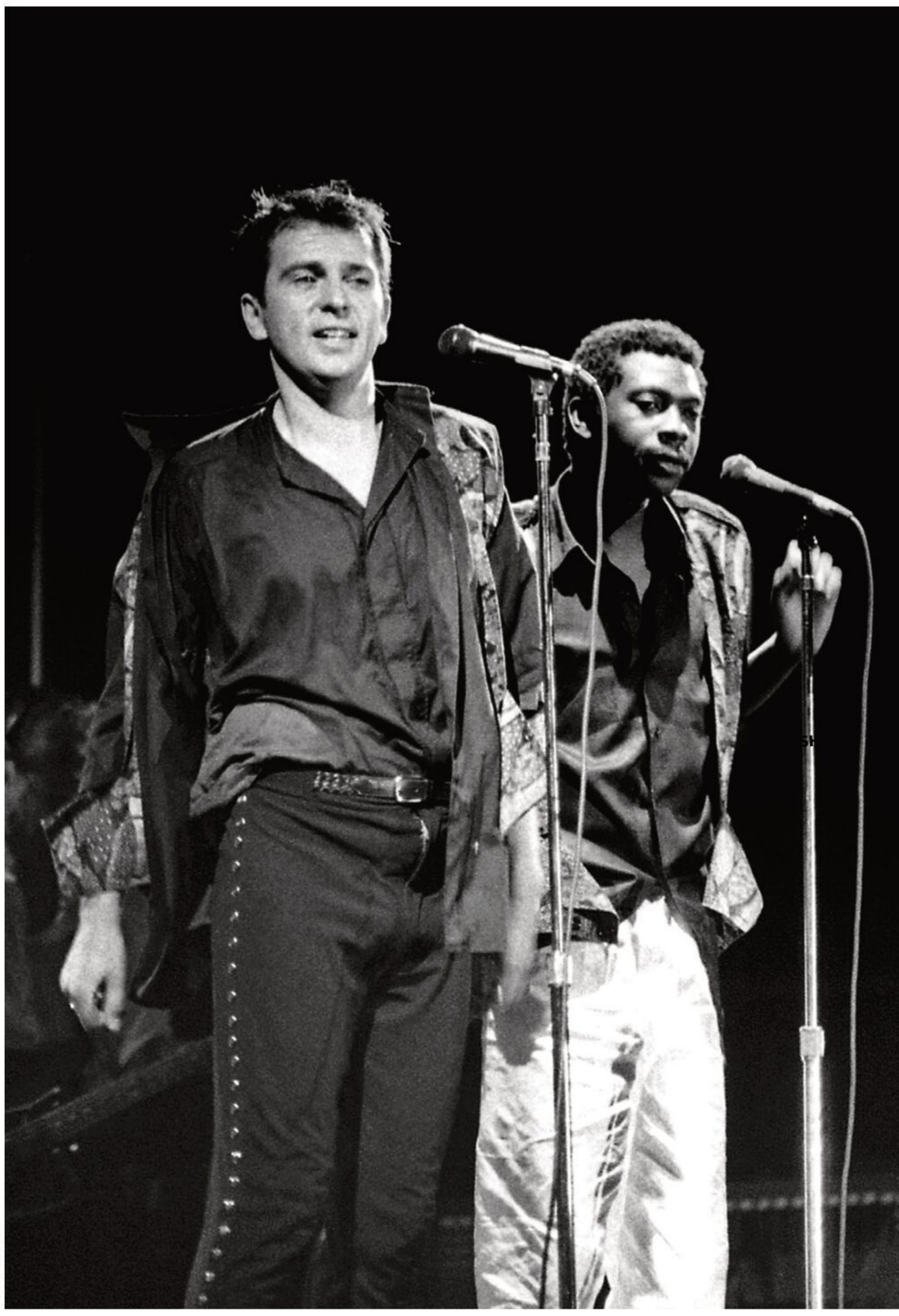
What Gabriel wanted Rodgers to do was to add his remarkable, rhythmical guitar playing to another skeletal idea, and one that had been inspired by the Korean video artist Nam June Paik, who used to make TV shows. He had asked Laurie Anderson and Peter Gabriel if they would like to collaborate, and they worked quickly to produce this groove.

The album closed with another of Gabriel's most loved songs, *In Your Eyes*, originally titled *Sagrada Familia*, inspired by the cathedral in Barcelona. Alluding to Antoni Gaudí and rifle heiress Sarah Winchester, the song was multi-layered and deeply affecting. The power of the track was made real by the stunning guest vocal performance from Youssou N'Dour, who sings in his native language, Ouoloff. *In Your Eyes* was featured dramatically in the Cameron Crowe film *Say Anything* in a sequence when protagonist Lloyd Dobler (John Cusack) plays it loudly from a ghetto blaster.

REX FEATURES

So was released on May 19, 1986. *Sledgehammer* was issued shortly before it and put Gabriel squarely into the charts and hearts of millions. With its Brothers Quay/Aardman Animation video, Gabriel showed that, after all, he was a song and dance man. Here was the flower-headed pipecleaner of *Willow Farm*, vamping it up for the MTV generation.

The video was a viral sensation long before such things existed. The single reached the top spot in the US. Gabriel was delighted. The most affectionate homage to the music that originated from deep within America, here was almost the ultimate tribute. An introverted white boy from a privileged British background convincingly interpreting the music of the impoverished, segregated south of America. And somehow, it not only worked, but absolutely nailed it.



PHOTOSHOT

Clockwise from above left: with *So* co-producer Daniel Lanois in 2004; onstage with Youssou N'Dour in Budapest, 1987; lining up alongside Sting and Bruce Springsteen for Amnesty.

So, just funky enough, just obscure enough, just nostalgic enough, fitted perfectly with the CD generation. Gabriel began to attract a breed of listener that welcomed him as a 'new artist'. This was liberating but would ultimately prove constraining. Although a super-slick short single had always been part of Gabriel's oeuvre, how willing would this new audience be when he was experimenting?

Writing in 2012, Gabriel said: "When I first heard *So*, I was really pleased. It wasn't as rich with texture and sonic experiment as my earlier albums, but it had a very strong spirit. It wasn't like I was an obscure artist. I'd had hits with *Shock The Monkey*, *Games Without Frontiers* and *Solsbury Hill*, but after each of them I'd purposefully retreated partially back into the shadows.

"With *So* this was the end of the idea of me being a sort of cult artist at the fringes of the mainstream, especially in America. There wasn't an option to go and hide in the shadows any more."

There were no shadows left to hide in. Gabriel was in the full glare of the spotlight, and for the first time in his life, it shone really very brightly indeed. And he did it with *So*, largely a progressive rock album.

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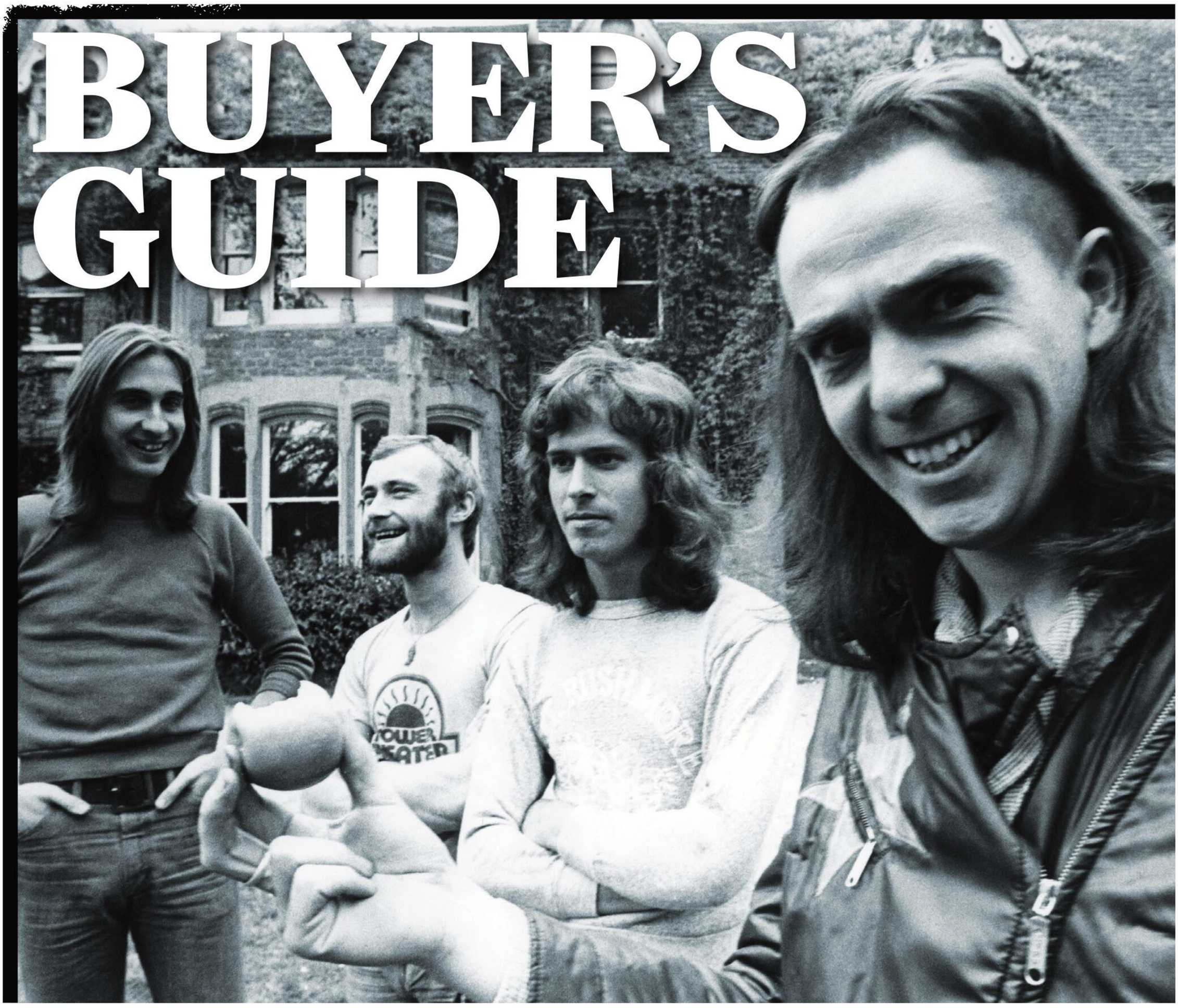
***In Your Eyes* (top) made an impact in Hollywood but *Sledgehammer* (below) made Gabriel a chart star.**



Genesis

From prog rock visionaries to stadium-packing pop heavyweights, few bands have had such an unlikely career. We look back at the albums Messrs Gabriel, Banks, Rutherford, Collins and Hackett gave the world.

If you were looking for one overarching theme or underlying concept applicable to the recorded output of Genesis across the four decades they entered the studio, it would be that of renewal. Time after time they demonstrate a capacity to creatively address and overcome adversity by reinventing themselves, altering their trajectory in the face of daunting odds.

After the comprehensive failure of their naive 1960s debut their change of direction embraced the more ambitious sounds that had been emerging from the underground but with an approach that was distinctly their own. Surviving the loss of Anthony Phillips after 1970's *Trespass*, that inner resilience saw a flowering of musical and performance ideas strong enough to take them from lowly support slots to headlining tours around Europe and Northern America, while defining the sound and to some degree, the more flamboyant impulses of the British progressive rock movement.

The diverse range of songs between *Trespass* through to *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* represents an impressive versatility, perfectly judging the line between delicate, introspective rumination to knowingly outrageous bombast. Given the band's close identification with Peter Gabriel's lead vocals and visual presence that they were able to comprehensively reinvent themselves after he quit is remarkable in itself. That they then went on to exceed both expectation and outstrip their previous sales is nothing short of astonishing.

The post-Gabriel period witnessed growing confidence that not only consolidated Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford's position as the structural underpinning of the band but made Phil Collins' occasional incursions at the front of the stage to sing the plaintive ballad *More Fool Me* a permanent fixture. The energy generated from the goodwill directed by audiences towards Collins when he took over could have powered a city.

This also speaks to another element of character hardwired into the DNA of their discography: tenacity. The capability to brave a rapidly changing situation, no matter how risky, is built into this music. While the inertia following Hackett's defection carried them along so far, they understood renewal was imperative with *Duke* signposting another, radically different future, one they assumed with consummate ease. While some decry the subversion of their prog rock origins to an overtly pop-dominated agenda, their global reach, as a result, remains an extraordinary accomplishment. You can't please all of the people all of the time but nobody can accuse Genesis of not giving it their best shot. *Sid Smith*

Essential Classics

Nursery Cryme

CHARISMA, 1971

The codification of Genesis' own myths and legends began to take shape on on this, their second album, and it couldn't have happened without the arrival of new boys Steve Hackett and Phil Collins, who gave the band the edge they'd been looking for.

Beneath the genteel surface, darker impulses lay waiting to unseat the apparent normality of the world described by Genesis, encapsulated in Paul Whitehead's fantastic cover art. From murderous sibling rivalry, ravenous plant-life hell-bent on world domination and the acts of capricious gods are all vividly brought to life in this collection of startling songs.

Foxtrot

CHARISMA, 1972

The grandeur of Banks' hair-raising Mellotron introduction to *Watcher of The Skies* heralds the sound of a group that is very much in control of its destiny.

There were several attempts at recording this record and their persistence paid off. Ranging from the unlikely collision of sci-fi and town planning (*Get 'Em Out By Friday*) to the pitfalls of hubris (*Can-Utility*) there's an intensely human dimension residing at the heart of this album.

While the side-long *Supper's Ready* is rightly feted as one of the most important songs in the prog rock canon, *Foxtrot's* consistency and calculated brilliance would take the band to the next level.

Selling England By The Pound

CHARISMA, 1973

Genesis' fifth studio album was a potent blend of thoughtful ornamentation, witty wordplay and wildly eclectic aspiration that had them casting off cultish status and adopting the mantle of serious contenders.

Hackett achieved rock godhood with *Firth of Fifth*'s note-bending solo, while Tony Banks' wasn't to be outdone with his skipping synth solo during *The Cinema Show*'s lengthy instrumental detour.

More than any earlier album, it brought their prodigious playing skills to the forefront of the material, though *I Know What I Like* gave them a modest sniff at the longed-for hit single.

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway

CHARISMA, 1974

On their sixth album, Genesis turned their unblinking eye for surreal detail Stateside, a move that would deepen the affiliation of a growing US fanbase.

Not all of his bandmates were convinced by Gabriel's allegory about personal transformation, but they rose to the challenge turning out something whose stone-cold classics outweigh and overshadow some of the fluff and detritus accumulated along the way.

Away from the bright urban glare, *The Carpet Crawlers* runs deep and true, while the first and last sides contained some of their best, most transcendent work.

Superior Reputation cementing

Trespass

CHARISMA, 1970

Anthony Phillips' blistering guitar within *The Knife* was rightly lauded as a breakthrough that pushed Genesis deeper into rock's terrain. However, the pastoral shading found in the autumnal backing vocals, the dappled interplay of 12-string acoustic guitars and the stately keyboards were just as crucial as the band began to find its own identity. *Stagnation*, *Dusk* and the uplifting *Visions Of Angels* provided evidence of the strength and depth of their early writing.

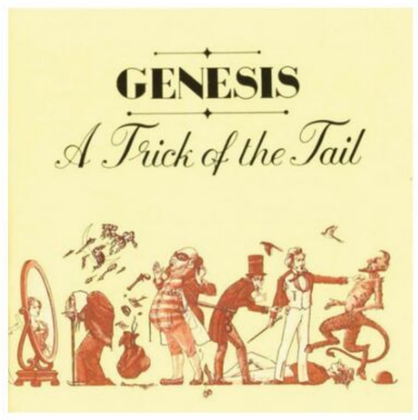
Though it's largely been overshadowed by what followed, *Trespass* was brimming with momentous invention and a sense of potential and possibility.

Genesis Live

CHARISMA, 1973

Released only a few months after *Foxtrot*, this was the sound of a band gaining an irresistible momentum. The roar of approval that greets the opening bars of *Watcher Of The Skies* showed the fanatical devotion Genesis had whipped up by this time in their career.

There was a formidable, at times eerie presence haunting the baroque grandstanding of *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed* and *The Musical Box* that came from Gabriel's other-wordly persona and the band's precision-guided assaults on older material, which dramatically reimagined their earliest live 'hit' *The Knife*. A reputation-cementing classic.



Trick Of The Tail

CHARISMA, 1976

There aren't too many bands that survive the departure of such a focal point as their lead vocalist but Genesis made it look easy.

With Phil Collins up front as well as behind the kit, opening track *Dance On A Volcano* extended their fusion-centric forays previously hinted at. Even the more genteel *Entangled* evoked a beguiling dream-like quality, underpinned by Banks' gorgeous Mellotron frosting.

That mix embodied in the yearning romanticism of *Mad Man Moon* and *Los Endos*' thunderous clamour distilled a new vocabulary that not only provided continuity but looked enthusiastically to the future.

Wind & Wuthering

CHARISMA, 1976

Such was their surge of popularity the second album released that year put the band inside the Top 30 on the American charts for the first time in their career. It was easy to see why.

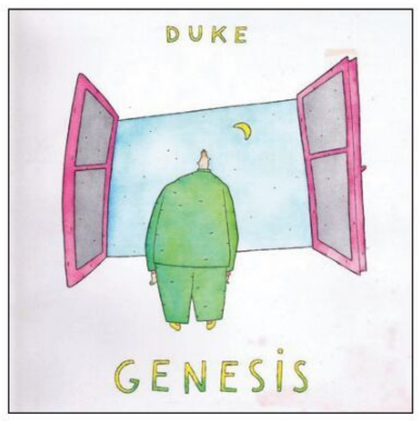
The epic grandeur of *Eleventh Earl Of Marr* showed Banks' ability to combine instrumental invention with soaring melodies remained undiminshed. Steve Hackett brought another classic to the table with the sumptuous, melancholic beauty of *Blood On The Rooftops* was British as tea and crumpets, while the guitarist was at the forefront of the instrumental *In That Quiet Earth* an ebullient joyous excursion into Genesis' brand of jazz-rock.

Seconds Out

CHARISMA, 1977

There was always an abundance of riches in the Genesis setlist and this double live album represented a choice selection of that dazzling treasure trove. Even weaker tracks such as a chirpy *Robbery, Assault And Battery* were afforded a weight and gravity lacking in their studio counterpart thanks largely to the addition of ex-Zappa/Weather Report drummer, Chester Thompson's whose nuanced contributions matched Collins' dynamic and lyrical parts.

The Cinema Show here transcends the original's confines, while *Los Endos*' white-knuckle ride gets what might be regarded as its definitive reading by a band in full-on imperial mode.



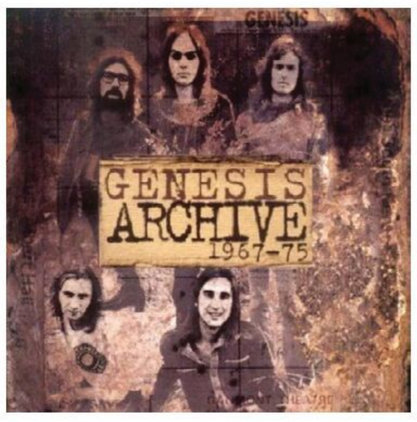
Duke

CHARISMA, 1980

If *...And Then There Were Three* traced a holding pattern, here you could almost see the swagger and renewed confidence rising up like a heat-haze from what was the most extensive reinvention of what it meant to be Genesis since Peter Gabriel's departure.

The stately pace of the title track matched the thoughtful exuberance of the band's prog heyday while elsewhere they maintained a trim economy when it came to instrumental soloing. *Turn It On Again* possessed an insistent energy that swept everything along in its wake. The point at which the triumvirate finally figured out what they were capable of, Genesis would never sound the same again.

Good Worth exploring



Genesis Archive 1967–75

VIRGIN, 1998

The first serious attempt to document the band's history was greeted with near-hysteria by devotees thanks to the lavishly detailed booklet and the depth of material it contained, including rarely-heard radio sessions.

Standouts included *Let Us Now Make Love* and *Pacidy*, a poignant evocation of bygone golden ages that revealed a debt to the folky harmonising of Fairport Convention. Further revelations were found amongst the wealth of early demos. However, the centrepiece was a full live recording of *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. A comprehensive celebration.

...And Then There Were Three

CHARISMA, 1978

The departure of guitarist Steve Hackett was a hammer blow from which the band would take some time to recover.

They did a reasonably convincing job of upping the boom and bluster with barnstormers such as *Down And Out* and *Deep In The Motherlode* but Mike Rutherford's journeyman guitar was no real substitute for Hackett's nimble fingers and fertile imagination.

Pretending that nothing had changed wasn't an option, especially as it spawned the insipid nursery-pop of *Follow You Follow Me*.

Abacab

CHARISMA, 1981

Benefiting from a playful inquisitiveness in its use of sound and texture *Abacab* was brimming with new ideas and was very much the trio hitting their stadium-friendly stride.

It was inevitable that the punchy horns which punctuated Collins' work would find their way onto *No Reply At All*. Though they eagerly embraced a more directly pop-inspired format, *Me And Sarah Jane*, *Keep It Dark*, the syncopated *Dodo/Lurker* and the claustrophobic *Whodunnit* played with diverse rhythm shifts and ambitious timbral mood changes, proving that commerciality and originality weren't necessarily mutually exclusive concepts.

Break out stars: Rutherford, Collins and Banks in the 80s.

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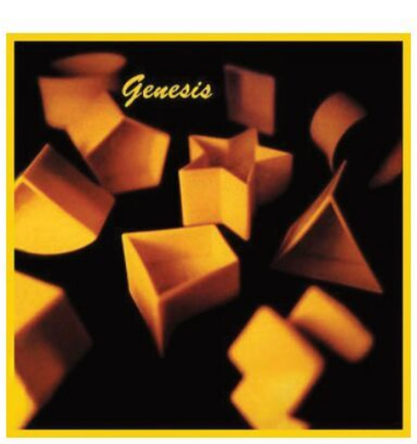
Avoid



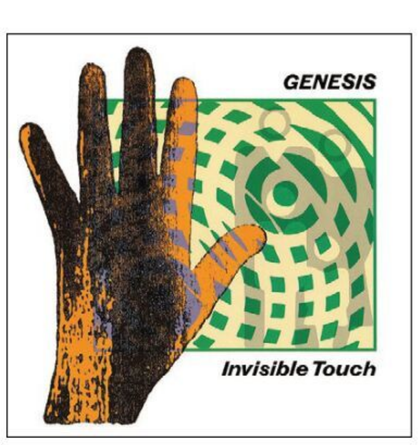
Genesis

CHARISMA VIRGIN, 1983

When it came to material for Genesis' 12th studio album the cupboard was bare. Their solution was to improvise their way out of this creative dry patch, retro-fitting the results into songs.

There were moments that handsomely rewarded this approach; the minimalistic menace of *Mama* is up there with their best song, and *Silver Rainbow* synthesises pop and prog elements successfully.

However, these are awkwardly and uncomfortably contrasted by some regrettable low points in their canon. While it might have been a laugh in the studio, the risible *Illegal Alien* is one that should've been left on the cutting room floor.

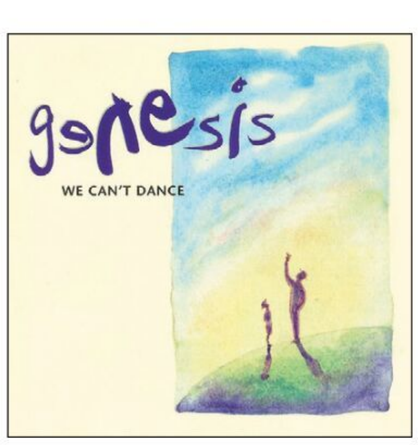


Invisible Touch

VIRGIN, 1986

The big one, at least commercially. Despite its ubiquity, it's hard to deny the title track's pervasively catchy earworm. A distillation of pop dynamics and detailed production, Collins' acerbic voice provided a pin-sharp focus that sat proud of the prevailing layers of slapback-echoed guitars, thunderous drum machines, and anonymous drifting synths.

Tonight, Tonight, Tonight and *Domino* offered more thoughtful moods, while lugubrious ballad, *In Too Deep*, was a favourite of serial killer Patrick Bateman, in Brett Easton Ellis' 1991 novel *American Psycho,* demonstrating the extent of Genesis' cultural penetration.

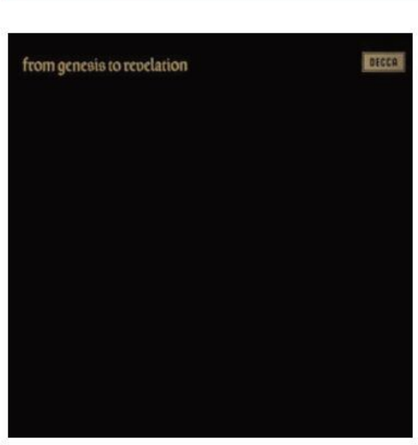


We Can't Dance

VIRGIN, 1991

Phil Collins' swan song with Genesis might have been a global chart-topper but in truth, the impression that all three principals were operating on a snoozy automatic pilot is unavoidable.

The self-deprecating *I Can't Dance* at least offered a witty if brief respite from the somnambulant plod of *Never A Time*, *Dreaming While You Sleep* and the toothless ineffectuality of *Tell Me Why*. The prevailing torpor infecting even the up-tempo numbers is ample evidence that their once-bold commercial gear-shift at the end of the '70s was reduced to formulaic water-treading by the start of the '90s.

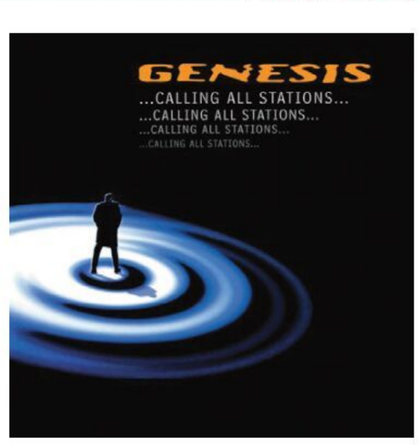


From Genesis To Revelation

DECCA, 1969

Hobbled by an indifferent production that inexplicably banishes the admittedly perfunctory drumming to the outer edges of the sonic picture, this collection of juvenilia was further burdened by unsympathetic, syrupy string and brass arrangements at the behest of, producer Jonathan King.

Initially demoed in the hope of selling themselves as songwriters for mainstream pop performers, its limp mix of schmaltzy love songs and anaemic rock sank without trace. Still, the proto-prog of *The Serpent*, *In The Beginning* and the mini-suite *A Place To Call My Own* hinted at what was to come.



Calling All Stations

VIRGIN, 1997

Boasting the lyric *Can anybody tell me, tell me exactly where I am, I've lost all sense of direction* the title track appeared to sum up the plight of Banks and Rutherford by the time Genesis entered the recording studio for the final time.

Replacing Phil Collins wasn't an easy task but new singer Ray Wilson did a good job with the meagre fare he'd been given adding an agreeable bite here and there. However, whatever the merits of his rough-hewn vocals, he couldn't lift the crushing, dead-hand dullness that marred the writing. Lacking any kind animating spark or drive, Genesis went out with a whimper rather than a bang.

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THE PROG INTERVIEW

PHIL COLLINS

In 2016, Phil Collins sat down with *Prog* to talk about, well, *everything* – including his life in Genesis, memorable nights on the lash with John Martyn and Eric Clapton, and competing with Peter Gabriel. Oh, and the small matter of those Genesis reunion rumours…

Words: Mark Blake

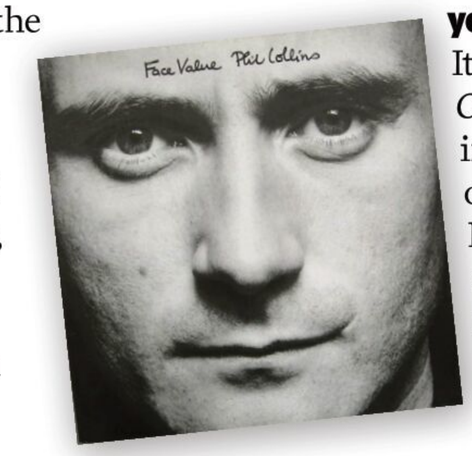
Like most rock musicians of a certain vintage, Phil Collins can't escape the past – or his own image. Hanging on the wall in a corridor in Warner Music's London office is a portrait of a younger Collins frowning quizzically into the camera lens.

Today, the just-turned-65-year-old Phil Collins, seated in his record company's lounge-cum-meeting room, looks older than his picture. Due to a broken bone in his foot, he's walking slowly with a stick. But his mind is as quick as ever.

"This is for *Prog* magazine, right?" he asks cheerily, easing himself into a sturdy chair, stick nearby – so he can whack your correspondent if he asks too many questions about *Nursery Cryme*, perhaps?

And yet here's the thing. Officially Collins is here to discuss his reissued 1982 and 1996 solo albums, *Hello, I Must Be Going* and *Dance Into The Light*. But he'll talk about anything. The old stuff, the not so old stuff, Genesis, Peter Gabriel and his own 150-million-selling solo career. To Phil Collins it's all music, and his music has never fitted into a box.

It's been a long day of interviews but rest assured, this will be the only one where Phil Collins can talk about specific movements in *Supper's Ready* and obscure Brand X album tracks (are there any other kind?) and be certain the readers know exactly what he's talking about. Turn it on again, Phil…



Do you remember the first song you ever wrote?

It was called *Lying, Crying, Dying*, and it was in D minor, the saddest of chords [grinning]. No, it really *was* in D minor. It was a very naïve but heartfelt ballad. This would have been in the late 60s when I was 15, 16 years old. Then I dried up until the mid-70s.

You just stopped for a few years?

Yes. But around that same time I wrote a thing that later became *Lilywhite Lilith* on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. I also had a bit of something that later became *Why Should I Lend You Mine (When You've Broken Yours Off Already)* for Brand X. It's funny how those bits only surfaced in later life.

Was it hard to break the Gabriel-Banks-Rutherford songwriting clique in Genesis?

The spirit of Genesis was Tony, Mike and Peter. I didn't regard myself as a songwriter then. But there were things in Genesis I was highly influential in. My strength was arranging.

What inspired that?

I was very into the first line-up of Yes – the one with Peter Banks. I remember loving the way they took other people's songs – *Something's Coming, Every Little Thing* – and did something different with them. I thought, "That's something I could do," so I brought that influence into Genesis.

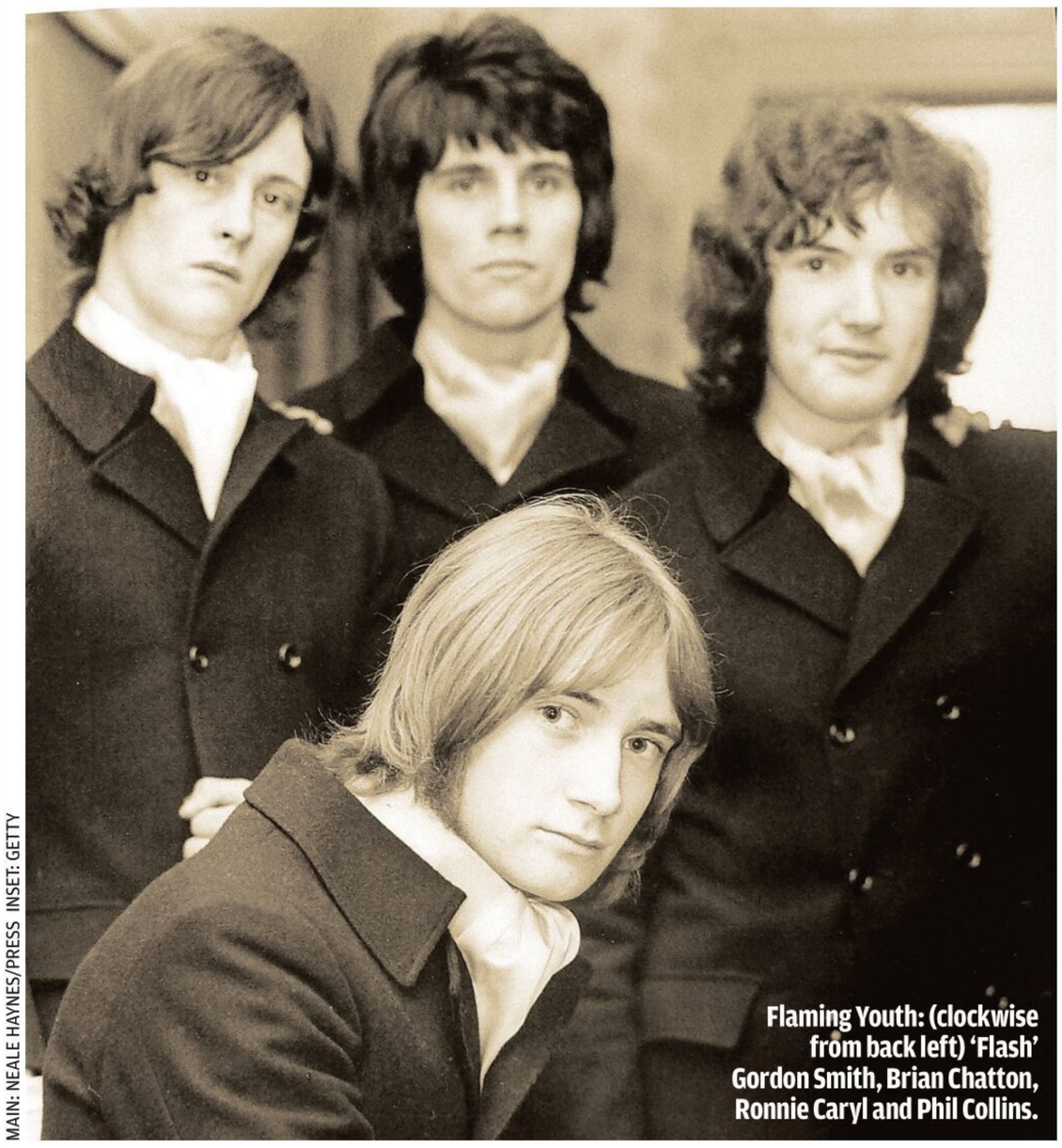
> "In Genesis I was this interesting square peg in a round hole. I was the joker, the class clown at the back."

Was there ever a sense of "You're just the drummer, Phil" from the others?

Not really. But I was this interesting square peg in a round hole. I was the joker, the class clown at the back. But I was also the only person who played with other people. [Laughing] I really was Genesis' only contact with the outside world.

How did this help the band?

It was through me dallying around and playing with other people that I introduced them to [producers] David Hentschel and later Hugh Padgham. I was always the one searching around and looking outside the bubble. But yeah, they encouraged it. I read something in Mike's book [his autobiography, *The Living Years*], where he wrote, "If Phil had an idea, you listened…" I was very touched by that.



Flaming Youth: (clockwise from back left) 'Flash' Gordon Smith, Brian Chatton, Ronnie Caryl and Phil Collins.

MAIN: NEALE HAYNES/PRESS INSET: GETTY

Face value: Phil Collins in 2016.

What did you think of Mike's book?
I enjoyed it very much. But when I first read a review, it didn't occur to me that I'd be in it. It never dawned on me.

Really? Come on...
Honestly. I just thought, "Oh, Mike's doing a book..." But when I realised I was in it, I thought I'd better see what he said. So it was illuminating to read that line. I never thought he'd say something like that.

Was there anything in it you didn't like?
I had no issue with it at all. Tony Banks had a few, but I've no idea what they were – probably stuff going back to when they were at school together. Steve [Hackett] has talked in the past about how he and I were the junior partners in Genesis.

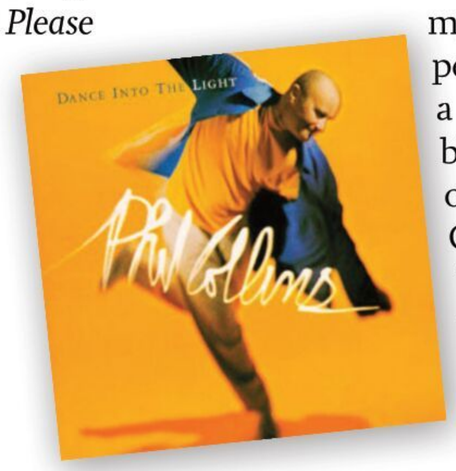
Standing back and watching the three old school friends having an argument?
Yes! "You stole my protractor!" That was a very good description of it.

How much did you contribute to writing the first songs you sang with Genesis, *For Absent Friends* and *More Fool Me*?
Yeah, they let me sing a couple – "Keep Phil happy... throw him a bone!" [Laughs] Me and Steve wrote most of *For Absent Friends*. *More Fool Me*? [Pause] God, I had completely forgotten about *More Fool Me*. I think I wrote some of the lyric but it was mostly a Mike song. I honestly didn't consider myself a songwriter until [1981's first solo album] *Face Value*. That's when I earned my stripes.

So what do you think of the songs you co-wrote for Genesis before then?
Wot Gorilla on *Wind & Wuthering* was my baby, and *Los Endos* on A Trick Of The Tail. Again, it was about ideas and arrangements. I'd heard the Santana album *Borboletta*, and there's a tune on it called *Promise Of A Fisherman*. If you've got it on your iPod, have a listen and think of *Los Endos*.

That's where it came from – I was more involved in that.

When you started making solo albums, were you torn between giving songs to Genesis and keeping them for yourself?
No, because when we were making *Duke* I still didn't know I was making a solo album. Genesis took *Please Don't Ask* and *Misunderstanding*. If they hadn't, they'd have been pivotal songs on *Face Value* – that's why we included the demos when we reissued it last year.



Hence the ongoing argument about whether you played them *In The Air Tonight*. Shall we keep it going?
[Laughing] Ah yes, the long-standing dispute. It's unlikely I'd have held that back. More likely they forgot they'd heard it, because there were only three chords in it.

Looking back, it does feel like you had a solo career by accident rather than design.
Yes. Had the personal stuff, getting divorced [from first wife, Andrea Bertorelli], not happened, I don't know if I'd ever have made a solo record. I was playing with Brand X at the time, and if I'd made any sort of solo record, it would have been more along those lines – but more elegant, more Weather Report and Wayne Shorter than the frenetic stuff Brand X did.

Saying that, you put some distance between Genesis and your solo records. Did you deliberately sign a solo deal with Virgin rather than Charisma?
It was deliberate, yes. I didn't want to divorce myself completely – 'cos I stayed in the band – but I did want to distance myself. I thought if people saw there was a solo album by the bloke from Genesis on the same label as Genesis, they'd say, "Oh, I know what that's gonna sound like." I also loved the Sex Pistols, who were on Virgin. So Virgin were seen as edgy, and I wanted edge.

Every day I'd go down to The Farm with the rest of them and really try to keep it down. I would try, but then it would slip out, 'Oh, *In The Air Tonight*'s just gone to No.1 in Holland...' I was a bit embarrassed.
PRESS

Match of the day: Genesis having a kickabout in 1979.
BARRY PLUMMER

Around the time you were making F*ace Value*, you were hanging out with John Martyn, who'd also split from his wife. There must have been some lively nights?
Yes, with John Martyn *and* Eric Clapton. I was doing *Grace And Danger* with John, and he said [whispers, grinning], "I wonder if Eric's got 'anything'." So he called Eric and he said, "Don't come to the house," 'cos he knew if John turned up he'd never leave. So we met in a pub in Guildford. That's how I got to know Eric – as a friend. We worked together later, but I was just this bloke to have a laugh with, one of his Ripley pals.

Revisiting *Hello, I Must Be Going* again, one minute you're singing *You Can't Hurry Love*, the next

you're ranting angrily on *I Don't Care Anymore* and listening to the neighbours having sex on *Thru These Walls*.
It was always about more than You *Can't Hurry Love*. [Emphatically] I have been saying this for years because everybody judged me by what they heard on the radio and didn't go any deeper. It's gratifying to hear that people are picking up on this now, because that was the point of these reissues. I was never just about the hits. But those were the songs everybody heard. There's such a diverse bunch of songs on *Face Value* and *Hello, I Must Going*, which you wouldn't get nowadays.

There seems to be a lot of pain in D*o You Know, Do You Care*, presumably to do with the break-up of your marriage.
I had forgotten how angry those songs were… because, yeah, by this point we had split up and [laughing] the lawyers were involved. But I wasn't as aware as other people of the anger. By the time I recorded the songs, I'd got a lot of that anger out of my system, and it didn't seem like such a huge jump from that to *You Can't Hurry Love*.

Does the subject matter make it difficult to listen to these songs now?
Not really, because these albums have all been in my head on and off for some time. I haven't heard these remasters. I was involved in choosing the demos and live material, but I left the remastering to [producer] Nick Davis, because I've only got one-and-a-half ears. But I revisited these songs when we were on the road to see if there was any material we could do.

Mike Rutherford admits that when you started having solo hits, there was some jealousy from the rest of Genesis.
Yes. Tony Banks said, "We wanted him to do well, but not *that* well." It's natural. We'd started doing *Abacab*, *Face Value* was out and suddenly it started doing its thing. Every day I'd go down to The Farm [studios] with the rest of them and really try and keep it down., but then it would slip out, "Oh, *In The Air Tonight*'s just gone to No.1 in Holland…" I was a bit embarrassed.

Why embarrassed?
Because Tony and Mike had both made solo albums [*A Curious Feeling* and *Smallcreep's Day*]. Mine was selling for the obvious reason, in my head, because everybody knows the singer — and I was the singer, and Tony and Mike didn't really sing on their albums.

There are obvious parallels between some of your music and what Peter Gabriel was doing around the same time.
There was a time when we were running parallel, yes. I think people forget that sometimes. You know what happened with *Intruder* [Gabriel's 1980 song on which Collins and Hugh Padgham pioneered the 'gated drum' sound]? When Peter first

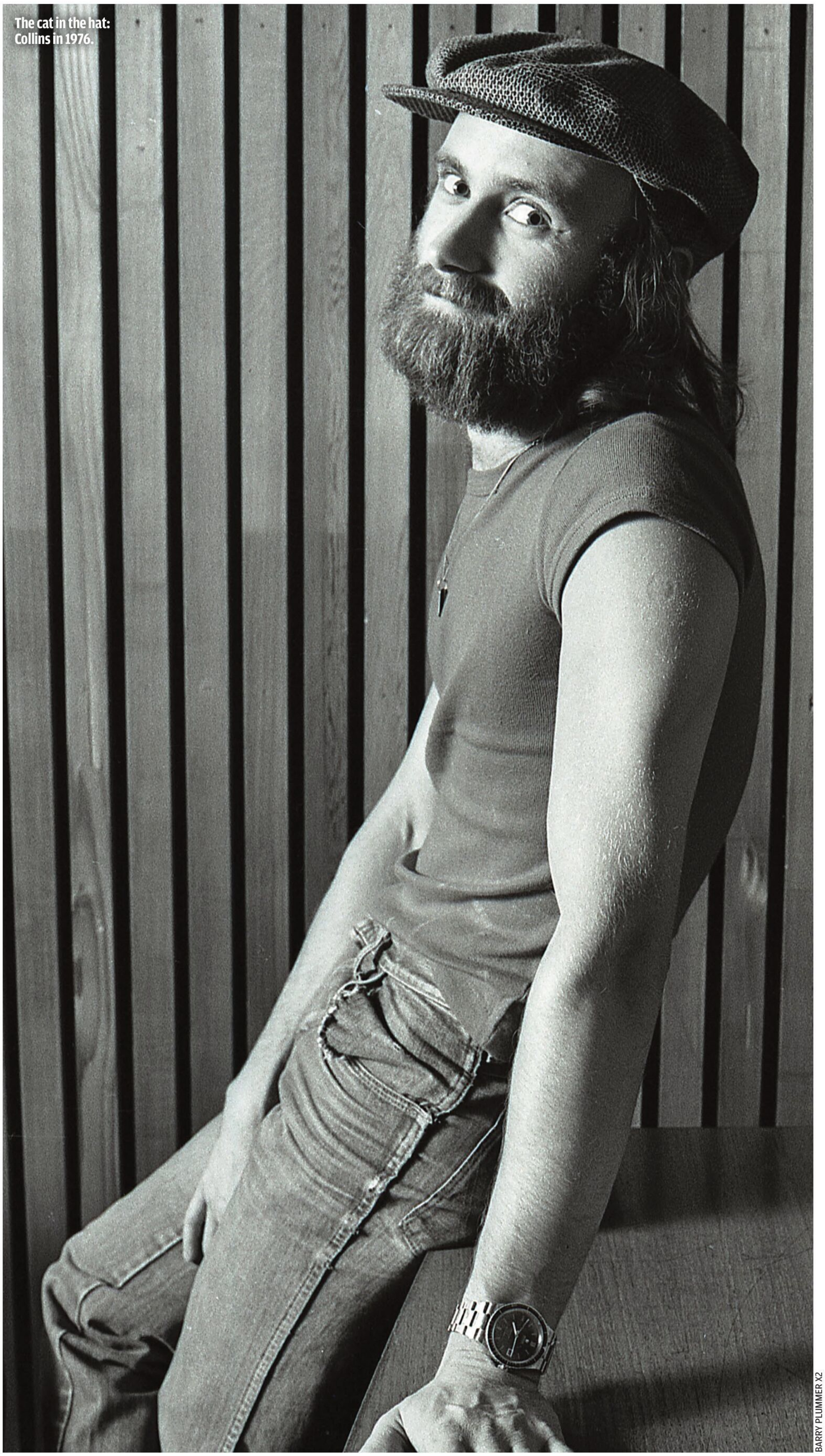
heard that sound — we called it the 'facehugger' like that thing in *Alien* — he got off the sofa and went, "What is that?" I said, "What are you going to do with it? That's my baby." He said, "I'm going to use it," and I went, "Mmmm..." [mouse-like whimper]. Then Peter rewrote *Intruder* to fit the drum rhythm.

Did it bother you?
Well, I said, "Can I at least have a credit?" — which he gave me, a little begrudgingly, I think. What isn't so well known is that I played drums in Peter's band around this time because he couldn't afford the American band. But I loved what Peter did. It was great fun. I remember spending a day playing *I Don't Remember*. I loved that hook — "Ding-ding-ding...". I said to Peter, "Why aren't you playing that?" He said [impersonates Gabriel's voice] "I don't want to do that." Peter would do things like that — like he was putting a tripwire in front of himself.

Like not letting drummers use cymbals on the album?
"Nothing metal" was the way he described it. "I don't want any metal on this album, Phil." I was okay with it, but I didn't know what to do with my left hand.

Isn't it a bit annoying that Gabriel gets all the kudos and you don't?
We were different animals. I was just trying to write the best songs I could, but you're right, Peter got all the credibility... and I got the money! Ha. I've never said that before, but that does sum it up.

You're reissuing the whole Phil Collins solo back catalogue. What do you think of these albums overall?
The next two to come will be [1985's] *No Jacket Required* and [2002's] *Testify*. I love *Testify* because what you hear is pretty much my demos. I have more problems with *No Jacket Required*, which, ironically, is one of my biggest-selling albums. It has some of my favourite songs — *Take Me Home, Long, Long Way To Go, Only You Know And I Know* — but it also has me trying to do something outside of my box, which was a couple of dance songs. *Sussudio* was my song, but I gave it to [keyboard player] David Frank to arrange and he put


The cat in the hat: Collins in 1976.
BARRY PLUMMER X2

all the bells and whistles on. He made it sound like all the other records sounded at that point – with bells and whistles on.

What about D*ance Into The Light*, which is being reissued at the same time as *Hello, I Must Be* Going?
On *Dance Into The Light* I was trying to write from a guitar player's perspective. I had some Rickenbacker samples on the keyboard, and I thought they would make me write different songs. Although I love some of those songs – *It's In Your Eyes*, *Love Police*, *That's What You Said* – it's not really me. Other people, whose opinions I respect, have said, "It's not really you, is it? Go back to the piano, Phil."

You've previously mentioned feeling "uncomfortable" about your public persona in the 1980s. But wasn't that 'cheeky chappie' Phil Collins necessary to sell songs in a big stadium?
Yeah, it was. I was an entertainer. I had the show-business background from being in [1960s musical] *Oliver!* as a kid. And I loved doing that thing at Wembley [Stadium], getting 80,000 people to go "Whooah..." That was magical. But I just can't particularly watch myself now. I find it very hard.

Why is that?
The problem is, some of the time, I found myself singing things I didn't quite understand.

Are we talking about lines like *'Sheets of double glazing help to keep outside the night'* in *Domino*?
Yes. That's a Tony lyric. I found it tricky. I used to think, "How do I sing this thing about double glazing? How do I sing this and convince an audience?" I found it awkward, because I was getting more personal in my songwriting, and here I was singing things I didn't understand – just syllables.

You've ruined it for the readers now!
But maybe it's something other people don't think about when they listen to the record.... Sorry if I've spoiled it for anyone by bringing attention to it. *All In A Mouse's Night* is another one [laughs]. But I can see what you mean.

Collins onstage: "I was an entertainer."
GETTY

Was that also a problem when you were singing Peter Gabriel's lyrics?
There were certain things in the old stuff, sure. But I loved *Supper's Ready*. Most of it, except for maybe *Willow Farm*, was well within my reach. I also loved *Apocalypse In 9/8* because I got to play the drums – and we had two drummers. And that end section, the bit about *'a new Jerusalem'*, that was fantastic to sing.

> Peter Gabriel and I were different animals. I was just trying to write the best songs I could but you're right, Peter got all the credibility... and I got the money! Ha. I've never said that before, but that does sum it up.

Do you get fed up being asked whether Genesis will get back together again?
No, because that 2007 reunion *was* good.

So could you see yourself playing on stage with them again?
Right now, talking to you, I can see it. But it's what happens when I get back to the hotel... I'll go off the idea. But a Genesis reunion with Peter Gabriel? People should forget about that.

So definitely no Gabriel?
Before the last reunion, we had this painful meeting in Glasgow, which seemed to go on forever. Mike, Tony and I were keen, and Steve was keen. But we couldn't get any commitment from Peter. Also, straight away, I could see that if Peter was involved, with the technology available it would have been a nightmare.

In what way?
I could see Peter coming up with these all these abstract ideas and rubbing Tony up the wrong way. It would have been great fun for me, though, because I could have just sat at the back and played drums.

Mike Rutherford said that when Peter and Steve left the room, the three of you looked at each other and it felt like "This is the band".
Yes, the three of us looked at each other and said, "Maybe just do it with us?" And in five minutes we'd made the decision.

You've had some well-publicised health problems. Can you still play the drums?
The honest answer is: I don't know. The last time I played drums was with Eric Clapton at the Albert Hall doing *Crossroads* for The Prince's Trust [in 2010], and as soon as we started playing, da-da-dada-dah, I thought, "Ow, this is not feeling right." But having talked for years about this and saying I cannot play the drums, I think I should get a little kit and practise.

So what's next?
My autobiography, which will be out in October. I started just after I finished writing the Alamo book [2012's *The Alamo And Beyond: A Collector's Journey*], because I was having fun and wanted to keep going. There's been a lot of talking and we've got the story. It's just a question of putting it all together.

What can we expect – Genesis, Brand X, the solo years, everything?
It'll be warts and all, I can promise that. It really will be the truth as I see it.

Turning It On Again?

They're the most successful prog band of all time, with a global impact that goes unrivalled. But by 2010, their reunion tour was an increasingly distant memory and Phil Collins was suffering debilitating health issues. So had **Genesis** truly called it a day? *Prog* sat down with **Mike Rutherford** and **Tony Banks** to ask just what the future held.

"I think we're probably done but you never know," affirms Genesis guitarist Mike Rutherford in an unexpectedly cheery manner given that we're talking about calling time on the career of the band. "But we all stay in touch, and of course Phil's had problems so can't drum at the moment. It will probably all go away in time... but the kind of drumming he did with us, I'm not sure he'd ever be able to do again. So nothing's planned."

Rutherford's reservations are understandable. With Genesis only managing to record one album and tour twice in the last 18 years, they've been far from prolific. And that was before Collins stated in a recent interview that he felt "Genesis are no longer. I don't foresee doing any more Genesis shows and it doesn't fit in with my life." Seemingly the neck problems that have made it excruciating for him to drum coupled with a desire to be around with his young family rather than revisit the write-record-tour cycle have led Collins to write off any future reunions. Yet Tony Banks is less pessimistic.

"Well, I think it may well be the case but I never like to say anything quite so final because I don't see the point really. Why put yourself in a corner? I always just describe Genesis as being mothballed. Phil probably isn't in quite the same position because he has physical problems in terms of playing. Phil feels that there's more pressure when he's with the group, because if you have to cancel a show it's a much bigger thing than a solo show. So I think it's very likely we won't do anything else, but I never say never. I'm sure we could still write well together, so those sorts of things are always a possibility. Whether Mike and I might do something together again, I mean, who knows? That's a different thing, though, and it wouldn't be Genesis if we did. I think if Genesis exists in any form now, it has to have Phil in it."

The relationship between the band members remains genuinely affectionate, and displays that trait of smiling through adversity that has seen them survive for over 40 years. Even the superficially distressing recent footage showing Phil Collins literally having to gaffer tape his drumsticks to his hands in order to play is also playfully dismissed. As Banks wryly and practically notes, "Well, it stops the sticks flying everywhere."

"Oh, I think that's quite funny and Phil laughs about it too," adds Rutherford. "But you know what? I had a bad injury before the last Genesis tour, when I snapped a tendon in my left hand. The body recovers and he'll recover fine. At our age, it just takes three years rather than one year."

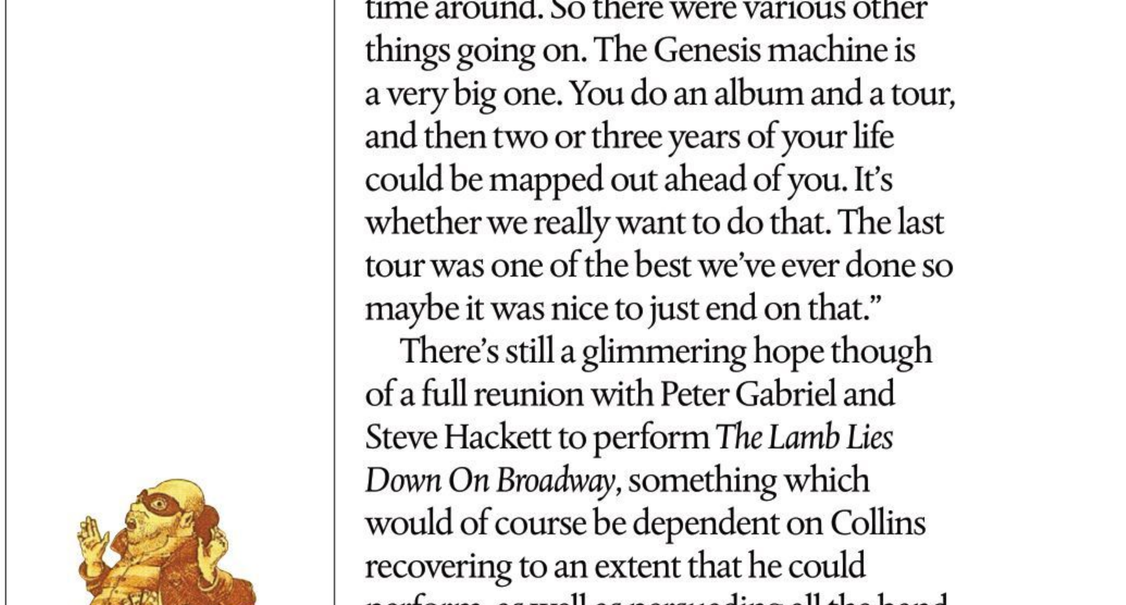
It appears then that, unpalatable as it sounds, the 2007 Turn It On Again Tour was the last opportunity to see Genesis. Reminiscing about that summer, Banks reveals that they were genuinely surprised at the level of demand for tickets, something which he attributes to the band's internal ongoing perception that Genesis aren't openly respected in the UK.

"In England in particular, our profile has always been a strange one as we have closet fans," he ruminates. "We don't have many people out there who think we're fantastic but when the shows are put on sale, they sell out pretty quickly. So it was a surprise for us that we were able to do the stadiums. It was like we'd never been gone and that was what was weird about it."

"We kind of fucked up in England," says Rutherford. "We put Twickenham on sale, and I wasn't over-confident because you never know how it'll go. It turned out that we could have done three or four nights, but we couldn't fit the dates in as they weren't available, so I felt bad about only being able to do two shows in the UK."

It had taken a decade for the band to reunite for those dates – and it led many to speculate that it was effectively a farewell tour. Was there a perception within the band at the time that that round of gigs may prove to be their last?

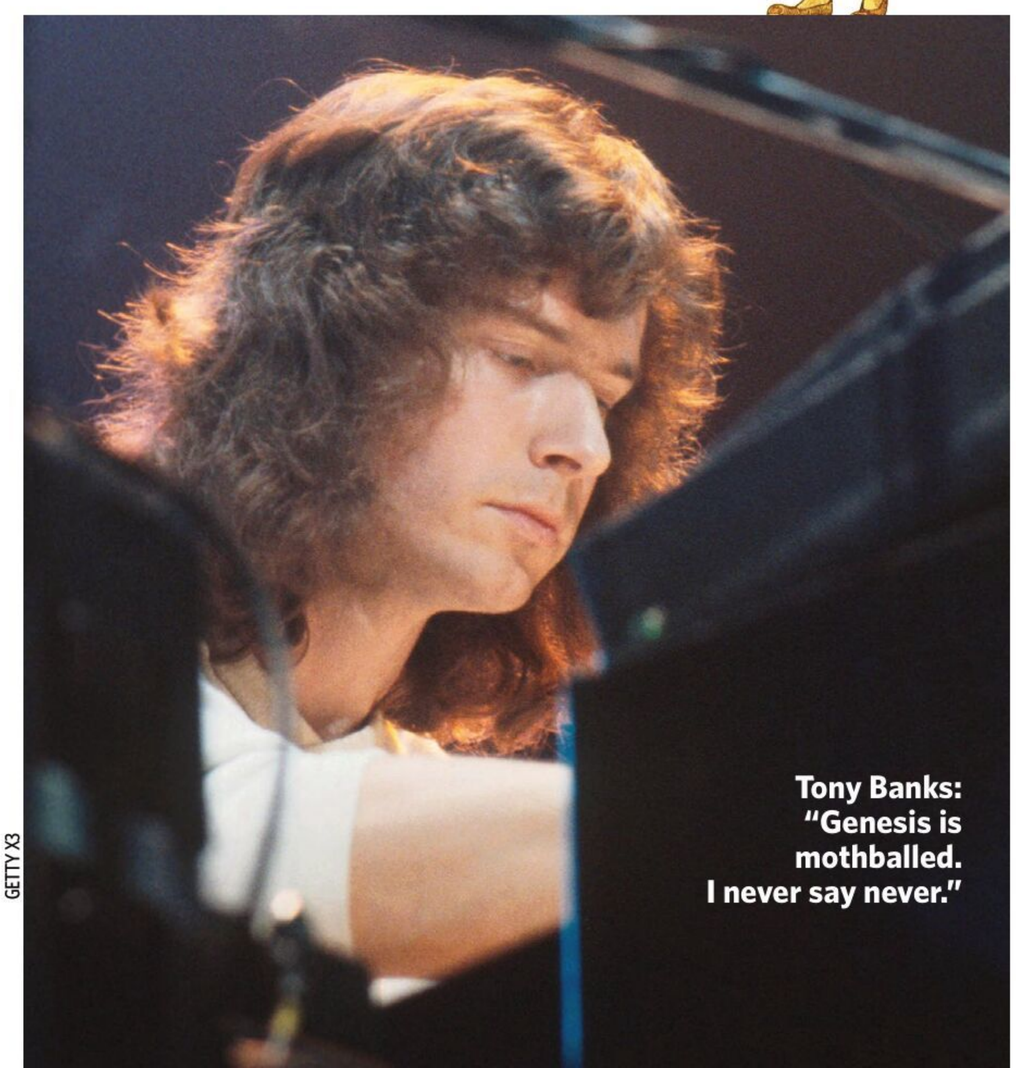
"Well, we did it thinking it was the last time that we were going to visit being Genesis, really," Banks explains. "But then we did it, everyone was happy, and at one point we thought it might go on a bit longer, but we decided against it. Phil for one didn't want to do too much touring, he wants to try and be with his kids more this time around. So there were various other things going on. The Genesis machine is a very big one. You do an album and a tour, and then two or three years of your life could be mapped out ahead of you. It's whether we really want to do that. The last tour was one of the best we've ever done so maybe it was nice to just end on that."



Rutherford: "I'm proud that we've remained good friends."

There's still a glimmering hope though of a full reunion with Peter Gabriel and Steve Hackett to perform *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, something which would of course be dependent on Collins recovering to an extent that he could perform, as well as persuading all the band members to do it. There have been well-documented and apparently protracted discussions over the last decade about such a re-formation, but they've never reached any consensus. The sheer logistics of revisiting the album would also seem to be prohibitive, even for a solitary charity gig.

"We talked about doing *The Lamb*... two years ago but Peter's quite difficult to tie down and he blows a bit hot and cold on it," reveals Banks. "At one point he seemed quite keen and the next minute he wasn't. When we did all those re-releases [in 2008], we talked about perhaps putting *The Lamb*... out first and doing a show. Peter was keen, but then thinking about it, it was all the practicalities of what it meant. How would he do it now? We'd have to change the key of every song, which isn't really a problem, but he can't really play the part of Rael any more as it wouldn't look right. And one charity gig to do *The Lamb*...? To rehearse and get it playable, even for one show, would take a long time. I think the whole thing just became quite a big thing and Peter started thinking 'Do I want to



Tony Banks: "Genesis is mothballed. I never say never."

GETTY X3

ALL THEIR OWN WORK

What's next for the Gen men's solo endeavours...

WITH THE LACK of Genesis activity, Rutherford has decided to reunite with Mike And The Mechanics with an album due early next year. Rutherford admits that the untimely death of singer Paul Young in 2000 had taken away some of his enthusiasm for the project. "Yeah something changed as we had a great vibe. Paul was always a naughty boy and lived the rock and roll lifestyle but was a great character. After that, we went out on tour with just Paul Carrack singing. Maybe we shouldn't have done that as we'd run our course you know?"

Carrack has decided against any involvement with the re-formed band leaving Rutherford with the tricky proposition of replacing two singers, and he's selected Roachford and Tim Howar to front the new band.

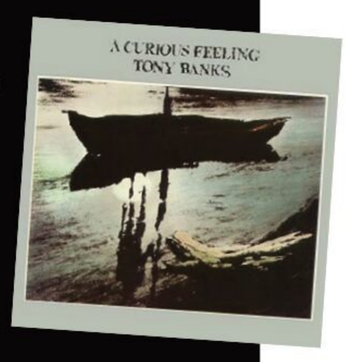
"Roachford's been great to write with and it was really quick and easy," says Rutherford. "In fact the whole thing has been easy, which is always a good sign I think. Tim Howar is the other singer on the album and he's come from more of a theatre background."

Rutherford's last solo album was 1982's *Acting Very Strange*, so with more free time is there the any possibility of a new album?

"I can pre-empt that by saying that I haven't got a very good voice and that's where you start," he laughs. "Being a songwriter, you want to write a song for a great singer. So writing for my dodgy old voice isn't really an option in my mind. The reason I started the Mechanics was because I thought 'Christ, I'm not going to sing again.'"

Tony Banks is currently working on a follow-up to his classical piece, *Seven*, which was released in 2004.

"It's provisionally called *Six*. If I keep going on long enough, I'll get to zero," he jokes. "I think the music is better on this one and hopefully I'm going to realise it closer to what I intended."



A majority of Bank's solo albums have been more in the Genesis mould of straight ahead rock. Is there a possibility that he might revisit this format?

"There's part of me that would love to do it but I've always found that side of my career a little depressing," he reasons. "You put all this work in, do all this stuff, you're very excited by it and you put the thing out and one week later you're back to the drawing board really. I suppose that is a bit of a disincentive. I'm not a very good self promoter. I didn't think there was anything new that I had to offer in that area, whereas the idea of working with an orchestra was something that I hadn't done. In many ways I was getting to the stage where I was craving drums, but then we did the Turn It On Again Tour and with two drummers behind me, that sorted out my lack of drums problem for a little bit. So there's nothing imminent at the moment and I keep doodling around on a few songs but at the moment I'm concentrating on the orchestral stuff." **RW**

into the same spot? I don't think you'd have quite so much trouble with Steve [Hackett], Mike and I. It's just that Peter and Phil are busy chaps."

"I think it's pretty unlikely us doing something like that now even if Phil could drum," laments Rutherford. "This is the year we're all 60, and I must say that if you'd said to me on my 50th birthday that in 10 years time, I would be playing in a small club in London with Mike And The Mechanics, I'd never have believed you."

Last farewell?: the Turn It On Again tour, 2007.

If this is the conclusion of their career, they leave behind a legacy of fine work that ensures their rightful place amongst the progressive greats. Banks puts their success down to the variety within the band's music as well as an identifiable element to their sound, with Rutherford also noting that they were aided by "luck and timing".

There are those who would suggest that such luck was, during the 80s, aided by a decision to commercialise their sound. Whether intentional or not, it gave the impression that Genesis were trying to capitalise on the solo success being enjoyed by Phil Collins, leading to a mass market appeal for the first time in the career. To some, their progressive reputation had been tarnished by pop and left those fans who had immersed themselves in such innovative albums as *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* and *Foxtrot* feeling disenfranchised by the likes of 1986's *Invisible Touch*. Does Rutherford understand that feeling of resigned, barely repressed annoyance that a sizeable proportion of their fans still harbour to this day?

"Well, yes, of course. Anyone who gets into a band when they were originally a cult would feel betrayed once they get mass appeal," he reasons. "You were their baby and that's second nature really. But a lot of them carry on listening to us, which is funny. I think that because of MTV, a hit single overshadowed the whole album. On all of our albums right until the end, there were always a couple of 10-minute songs in there and my perception is that the singles were so high profile that they could often dwarf the rest of the songs on the album."

"Obviously it doesn't feel that way when you're inside it – and besides, I never know where that break comes," argues Banks. "I think we pretty much had a straight line in the way we thought about things right up to and including *Duke*. It wasn't until *Abacab* when we thought of changing our approach. If anything, we just got much better at writing hit songs, which was something we never set out to do, but suddenly, once you got played on the radio we became a radio band. You then had things like *Turn It On Again*, which really wasn't an obvious single as it has a funny time signature, or even *Mama*, which were able to be released as singles. I'm obviously not denying that there were simpler things on some of the later albums, but there were also longer pieces on there too."

There's also a certain irony in the fact that albums like *Invisible Touch* possessed that 80s, all-consuming electronic drum sound which makes them now sound more dated than some of their older albums.

"It's a bit like flared trousers from the 70s, as they didn't last very well," says Rutherford. "In a sense we were always trying to do something that you hadn't heard before and sometimes it didn't work. If you try and be brave… when things didn't work it's really not great."

With the likelihood of a live or studio Genesis reunion being slim, and assuming that we are now discussing Genesis firmly in the past tense, how do Banks and Rutherford want the band to be remembered?

"I'm very proud of our onstage career," says Rutherford. "We did an awful lot of live shows and I always felt that the communications at Genesis concerts was very good. There were no journalists in the way and it was just a natural reaction from the fans. They either liked us or they didn't. I'm also so proud that we, as a band, have remained such good friends."

"Oh, I don't know," counters Banks on the subject, with an air of self-conscious humility. "I guess just to be remembered would be quite good."

"THE GENESIS MACHINE IS A BIG ONE. WOULD WE WANT THAT AGAIN?"

– TONY BANKS

New York 1976: Hackett and Bruford join in with sending up a flare or two for fashion help.

THE DIVIDING LINE

Ray Wilson's time as Genesis frontman was controversial, but he's still flying the flag...

Ray Wilson has been, to some extent, the forgotten Genesis singer. Taking over from Phil Collins for 1996's *Calling All Stations*, at the time the band and album were heavily criticised. However,a rehabilitation has occurred in recent times.

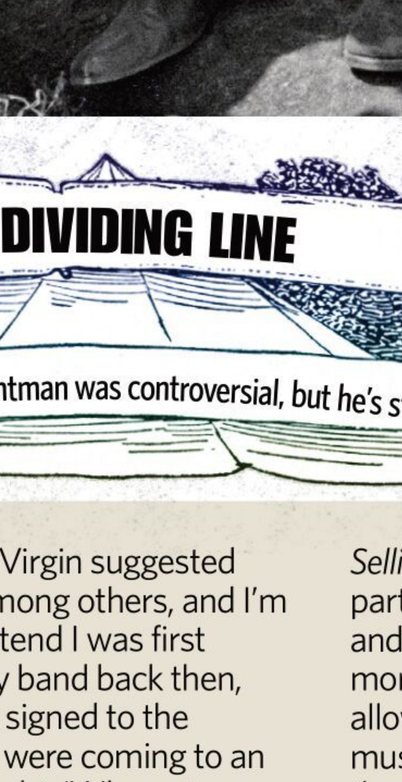
"I suppose people are kinder now," admits Wilson, from his home in Poland. "The problem was that I had such a tough act to follow. Who would have been mad enough to step into Phil Collins' shoes? It was rather like the situation facing Paul Rodgers more recently, when he joined Queen."

Wilson was asked to audition for the job, rather than applying.

"The band were on Virgin, and so Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks approached the label and asked if there was anyone suitable on their roster. I know Virgin suggested Bryan Ferry among others, and I'm not gonna pretend I was first choice. But my band back then, Stiltskin, were signed to the company and were coming to an end. So, I thought, 'Why not audition for Genesis?'."

Not a huge fan of the band at the time, Wilson partly appealed because he was more of a Peter Gabriel man.

"I can't say that I was massively into Genesis at all. I had a couple of albums, and *Selling England By The Pound* was a particular favourite of mine. Mike and Tony liked the fact that I was more into Gabriel, because it allowed them to be a little different musically, rather than tied to what they'd done with Phil."



Wilson: "Mike and Tony liked that I was into Gabriel."

While many saw Wilson as no more than a hired hand, that wasn't true. Rutherford and Banks gave Wilson equal status.

"They realised that if there was to be any credibility with the new line-up, and any future at all for Genesis, then I had to be given that billing. Phil was such a powerful frontman that to bring in an employee would have put me at a disadvantage. They were both very easy to work with, and I learnt a lot from them as a writer."

The poor sales performance for *Calling All Stations*, which led to the band having to cancel a US tour, eventually forced Genesis to split up in 1998. It's a decision Wilson feels was wrong.

"We should have carried on and done another album. We could have turned things around, if only we'd stuck together. I know Tony Banks was also of the same opinion. But Mike Rutherford couldn't be persuaded."

But Wilson hasn't abandoned his Genesis heritage at all.

"I now have a touring project called Genesis Klassik and we do a lot in Europe, where I've always been more popular than in the UK. It's an orchestral version of Genesis, and I do a lot of stuff that I never did when I was in the band. I'd like to think I could bring this over to Britain next year." **MD**

GETTY X3

Past Masters

In 2012, **Steve Hackett** corralled the biggest names in prog to re-interpret classics from the Genesis back catalogue. The result, *Genesis Revisited II*, was more than just an album – it was a celebration of the genre itself, and revealed that these songs still sound like nothing else out there.

Words: Paul Sexton **Portraits:** Kevin Nixon/Futurenetwork

Steve Hackett sits in the bar of a London hotel and casts a glance towards his refreshment of choice. "Look what it's come down to," he says with mock ruefulness. "At one time it used to be a Scotch and Coke. Now it's a weak decaf cappuccino. Not good, is it?"

The moonshine intake may have calmed down, but the workload and the output certainly haven't. One of Britain's most prodigious guitarists continues to write, tour and record at a rate that would challenge many a musician half his age. At 62, and looking unnervingly almost the same as he did 20 years ago, Hackett is on a hot streak.

No sooner have he and Chris Squire delivered the collaborative Squackett album *A Life Within A Day*, and seen its title track scoop the Anthem trophy at our Progressive Music Awards, than the finger-tapping guitar godhead is back, breathlessly delivering the double CD *Genesis Revisited II*. It's been a race to the finishing line, but one of the most eagerly awaited albums in recent prog history is now with us, and what a mighty beast it is.

"With the Squackett album, there were other things going on at the same time, but that took four years," muses Hackett. "This took from January to August, and considering its Wagnerian proportions, probably the longest album anyone's ever done... it's the biggest project I was ever involved with, but it was recorded in a compressed amount of time. There were a lot of balls in the air."

> "Guys like me and my ilk, my ne'er-do-well pals, suddenly we're the professors of prog. Weird, isn't it? And yet for a while, it was a four-letter word."
>
> **Steve Hackett**

To complete nearly 150 minutes' worth of reinterpretations from his Genesis years in such a slender timespan is a gargantuan achievement, especially with guest appearances from the likes of Steven Wilson, John Wetton, Neal Morse and Nik Kershaw, among a cast of dozens. As he says, with justifiable pride: "It's like the whole of the music business is on it, saying, 'We like this stuff.'"

That's before you mention the multi-format release orgy around the project, with a two-CD digibook, a quadruple vinyl edition and, of course, the digital incarnation. And yet, 16 years on from *Watcher Of The Skies: Genesis Revisited*, the unreasonable but undeniable question on the lips of many fans will be: 'What kept you?'

"I wasn't sure if I could justify it," says Hackett, thinking back to the period after the first album appeared in 1996. "I wasn't in a position [to do another] at that point, especially when Genesis was firmly in existence. I feel we're in a different era now, where the nice thing is, it seems as if music without limits is the new description of what progressive was all about. I'm very happy to subscribe to that."

As before, there's no intention to better a catalogue created during his Genesis tenure, which spanned seven years and ended all of 35 years ago. "I wanted to enlarge it, expand it," he says, "so that occasionally, even though there's not a real symphony on it, at times it has the panoramic sweep of that."

The new set drills down deep into the material Hackett created with his bandmates, with new versions of such staples as *Supper's Ready* and *The Musical Box*, plus four songs that he describes as "Genesis branches", written for and even rehearsed by the group but never recorded.

"The reason it turned into two albums was that I had one idea of how it should be, and I'd chosen the songs and agreed that with Thomas Waber at Inside Out Records. Then I spoke to Jason Day at EMI, and he said 'You should do songs where the guitar part is absolutely crucial to the plot.'

"I thought, 'Yes, he's absolutely right, he's given me a truth there.' I was going to try

FUTURE

"Steve and I have known each other for just over 40 years. We first met at a Peter Banks session where Mr Collins and I were the rhythm section. We've stayed in touch, and our paths have crossed regularly in the intervening years. I very much enjoyed singing *Afterglow* for *Genesis Revisited II*. When I stood in front of the microphone to record, I smiled when I said to Steve, 'The notes of the opening line are the same as *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas*.' Steve, also smiling, said, 'Funny that. Phil said the same thing.'" **– *John Wetton***

Supper's ready! Steve gears up to tuck into some of his Genesis favourites.

and be magnanimous about it and step back and say, 'I just want to do the best songs.' But I ended up doing two albums so that there's plenty of guitar, and the other songs where there are not guitar heroics going on, where we're all accompanying.

"Originally [in Genesis], it would be three 12-string players all sitting down together. I did all of those parts for this, with two exceptions. On *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed*, from *Nursery Cryme*, I'd played that a couple of years earlier at the High Voltage Festival with Transatlantic. I guested with them for their encore. Roine Stolt from The Flower Kings and I swapped phrases for that.

"I said, 'Would you like to record this song, with Neal Morse on vocals?' He did a great job singing, Roine sent back a solo and I said, 'I don't feel the need to fire salvos across all of that – why don't we just let it run?' So I gave him the floor for that. Similarly with Steve Rothery from Marillion. At the end of *The Lamia*, he kicks off the soloing and we do alternate phrases."

"Bands like Muse and Elbow obviously have progressive roots. I think we're affecting the mainstream."

Steve Hackett

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the myriad contributions to the album is that they were all done as favours.

"So much of it had to be done on location," explains Hackett. "The idea of bussing everyone in to London was never going to be a goer, and a lot of people prefer to work at home in their studio, as I do myself. If people want me to be on their albums, normally they'll send me something and most of the time I just do this for love, basically. I do it for the crack. I always think I play better if there's no money involved. Use it if you like it, or cover the engineering fees.

"So we worked on a barter system with this. Lots of people working at home, different teams working at the same time, two drummers being recorded at the same time, while I'm off frantically trying to finish my guitar overdubs and vocals for the few things that I did sing. But I wanted to sidestep the vocal role here. I didn't think it was about me. I thought what it was really about was 35-odd people who show up on this thing.

"Roger King, the engineer, I have to say, I can't sing his praises highly enough. It was a hell of a lot of work for him. I saw him turning various shades of green towards the end. He was doing 12-hour days, as I was, to try to bring it in on time, and frankly I was amazed. We went over the schedule by two weeks, which isn't bad."

In his unassuming way, Hackett clearly likes to leaf through these most widely read pages from his extremely varied and expansive career, without being defined by them. "I like to think I've moved on since I left Genesis," he says. "I try to cover every known genre. I did a classical album a while back that had six pieces of Bach on it. But you can be a musical

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"Genesis were one of the bands that drew John Lennon's interest, I think that was pretty good going. The early stuff also galvanised other musicians, so for me, that's the real deal."
Steve Hackett
Anyone for croquet? Steve shows he's one of prog's big hitters.

FUTURE

"When Steve asked me to play on the album, I was flattered and nervous. He was one of my main inspirations and his emotional and melodic style continues to inspire me. I recorded my guitar parts for *The Lamia* at Steve's studio. I tried to come up with something interesting over what are quite unusual chord changes. Steve and Roger King seemed happy with the result and I hope to work with Steve again at some point."
– Steve Rothery

FUTURE

"It's been a tremendous honour to play with Steve over the past four years. The live work has been inspirational. If I'd known as a teenager that I'd end up working with such an icon, I don't think I could have contained myself. Roger King did an incredible job on arrangements and transcribing the parts for me to play. To add a little spice, I chose to perform completely naked in the comfort of my own studio. So to all the purchasers of this new reworking of these Genesis classics, I hope you all enjoy the sound of me with my balls out." ***– Nick Beggs***

time machine — you can go back, you can go forward, move to other countries, work in South America. It's one of the things I do: I've worked with guys from Azerbaijan, I've been on tour with Hungarian fusion guys. I don't have prejudice. Don't disparage any genre because at some point, someone will change your mind."

One of the features of September's Prog Awards was the cordial conversation Hackett was seen to enjoy with Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford, who were on hand to collect the Lifetime Achievement gong.

"Socially, between myself and the Genesis guys, it's been warm for a long time," says Steve. "But in answer to the inevitable question, 'Why aren't you involving the rest of the Genesis guys?' [which your reporter hadn't even asked] there's always been a resistance to any attempt that I've had to involve them in anything for years. Other than the odd charity gig which we managed to do together in the early 80s, but that really is a very long time ago."

"Most of the time I just do this for love – I do it for the crack. I always think I play better if there's no money involved."

Steve Hackett

But Hackett is more than happy to champion the creative roots of a style that continues to be woefully, almost wilfully, misunderstood in the mainstream media. "I was interviewed at the awards for BBC2, and the interviewer was saying, 'Well yes, but wasn't it all about swords and sorcery, dungeons and dragons?' and being very dismissive. I gave a much longer interview than the five seconds I got on camera, but I was saying it covered classical, jazz, pop, rock and social comment. Yes, there was pantomime and humour, but nothing was off limits — it did attempt to be everything.

"I feel as if I'm answering this list of charges," he says calmly. "If *Selling England By The Pound* in 1973 was an album that drew John Lennon's interest, I think that was pretty good going. We were one of the bands he was listening to at that point, he's on record saying that, in the WNEW interview. So I can't disparage the early stuff, although I suspect the other guys in the band try to draw a veil over that and say, 'That just appealed to

GETTY/FUTURE

"After 30 years in the industry, there are not too many things that would stimulate my childhood wonder. Working on this project with Steve is one of the coolest things I've had the pleasure to experience in a very long time. Steve and his crew did an amazing job creating authentic renditions of the music and to sing along with them was magical. I always knew he's a brilliant and unique guitar player but to discover he's also a gracious and decent human being is really the icing on the cake." ***– Francis Dunnery***

PRESS

"Having been an early Genesis fan all my life, and very keen on much of Steve's solo work, I was eager to work with him in any capacity he would welcome. Being that we'd played *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed* at the High Voltage Festival a few years ago, together with Transatlantic, it seemed a natural choice for him to ask me to sing that one. I've always loved it, particularly the version on *Genesis Live*. I used to have a cassette of that album that I listened to in high school all the time, and that was one of my favourite tracks. What a thrill for me to work with the man himself on such a great project." **– *Neal Morse***

students.' Well, it also galvanised other musicians, so for me, that's the real deal."

Brian May, Eddie Van Halen et al, step forward.

So what sort of memories were conjured by volunteering to revisit the 1970s? "I think good and bad," says Hackett matter-of-factly. "A great positive was that Gabriel called me up first of all to join Genesis, I was welcomed in as a full songwriting partner, and that was the band's strength, that we were a songwriters' collective. It's the co-op, here they come.

"The term progressive was not in common parlance at that time. Latterly, everything we did during that period has been described as that. But there were these great collisions of styles going on, unlikely constructions that shouldn't really have worked, songs that were allowed to meander, peter out and then come back. And there was not the emphasis on dumbing down that became so much a part of the video era, where in a way you had an extended *Muppet Show* going on everywhere."

"It seems as if music without limits is the new description of what progressive was all about. I'm very happy to subscribe to that."

Steve Hackett

Tickets are selling briskly for Hackett's *Genesis Revisited II* UK tour dates next May. "It seems to have gone through the roof already, so that's lovely. It'll be with a visual presentation, with lights and screens. Nurse, the screens!

"I'm not recreating the way it looked at that time – it's new visuals and a new cast, of course. I'm anxious that it doesn't present itself as a 70s show. The music from the 70s is where the similarity ends, I like to think, even though it was a golden era for us."

With his own new selection of songs from those days back in the ether alongside the work of current bands bearing clear hallmarks, Hackett can be gratified about a certain legacy, and he is. "Bands like Muse and Elbow obviously have progressive roots," he says. "I think we're affecting the mainstream. Guys like me and my ilk, my ne'er-do-well pals, suddenly we're the professors of prog. Weird, isn't it? And yet for a while, it was a four-letter word."

Ripples: there's nothing like a relaxing glass of red while under burning hot lights, surrounded by literal song title proppage.

LOCATION: THANKS TO SEA SHELL OF LISSON GROVE WWW.SEASHELLRESTAURANT.CO.UK

FUTURE

"*Foxtrot* changed my perception of what rock could be beyond blues guitars. Never had I heard a band that could be both breathtakingly beautiful and brutal, with a singer insisting on being a flower in a surreal setting beyond time. Fast forward 40 years and the guitarist from the same band asks me to guest on *Genesis Revisited II*! As excited as I am about the beautiful renditions on these CDs, I'm even more excited to finally be able to hear the 'real' Genesis live next year, with my favourite setlist. There is a God and he smiles at his *Genesis II*." **– *Roine Stolt***

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We know what you like...

We asked the readers of *Prog* magazine to tell us their favourite **Genesis** songs. And boy, did they deliver! You can see the poll results in the column on the right, and we've listed the songs below chronologically. And be warned: thereπ are a few surprises...

Words: Malcolm Dome, Jerry Ewing, Chris Roberts, Johnny Sharp, David West

SILENT SUN
From Genesis To Revelation, 1969

The first single for the Jonathan King-produced youngsters was written by Gabriel and Banks, striving to emulate the Bee Gees, whose plaintive ballads of the time they knew King liked. Midway between pastiche and homage, its naïve folk pop charm was then drenched in Arthur Greenslade orchestral strings by their now-discredited school alumnus, who suggested their band name. It got bad reviews and flopped, but sits serenely on the underrated (not least by its makers) debut album. **CR**

THE KNIFE
Trespass, 1970

Their live show finale in the early years, *The Knife* is more aggressive and muscular than most Genesis of the time, that punchy, dare we stay stabbing organ riff inspired in part by The Nice (indeed, its working title was 'Nice'). In the context of the gentle *Trespass*, it's practically metal. Peter Gabriel, whose flute solo gives a quiet respite from the jabs and hooks, was swotting up on Gandhi and wrote lyrics about the inevitability of violence leading to dictatorships. As the last song played at 1982's Six Of The Best reunion concert, it remains the final piece played by that permutation of personnel. **CR**

***From Genesis To Revelation*, 1969.**

THE MUSICAL BOX
Nursery Cryme, 1971

This charmingly macabre song tells the unhappy tale of young Henry who, in a scene straight out of Edward Gorey's *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*, is decapitated by his friend Cynthia while playing croquet. When Cynthia later opens Henry's music box, he reappears as a libidinous old man. *Nursery Cryme*, the album on which the song first appeared, was a keystone moment for Genesis. Anthony Phillips and John Mayhew were gone from the line-up, replaced by Steve Hackett and Phil Collins, and while *The Musical Box* still had plenty of their formative folk sound, Genesis' music was growing in ambition and complexity. From the opening passages led by

***Trespass*, 1970.**

***Nursery Cryme*, 1971.**

BARRIE WENTZELL

Peter Gabriel sells England by the pound in 1973.

GENESIS TOP 40

1. Supper's Ready
2. Firth Of Fifth
3. The Cinema Show
4. The Musical Box
5. Carpet Crawlers
6. Dancing With The Moonlit Knight
7. Watcher Of The Skies
8. In The Cage
9. Ripples...
10. Dance On A Volcano
11. I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)
12. The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway
13. Afterglow
14. Home By The Sea/ Second Home By The Sea
15. Blood On The Rooftops
16. Entangled
17. Follow You, Follow Me
18. Los Endos
19. The Knife
20. Mama
21. Squonk
22. The Fountain Of Salmacis
23. One For The Vine
24. The Battle Of Epping Forest
25. Can-Utility And The Coastliners
26. The Lamia
27. Abacab
28. A Trick Of The Tail
29. Back In N.Y.C.
30. The Return Of The Giant Hogweed
31. Eleventh Earl Of Mar
32. Dodo/Lurker
33. Robbery, Assault & Battery
34. Domino
35. Get 'Em Out By Friday
36. Duchess
37. Deep In The Motherlode
38. Duke's Travels/ Duke's End
39. Silent Sun
40. Fading Lights

12-string guitar and flute, the song features Hackett's rousing electric guitar work and a spirited organ solo from Tony Banks in the galloping mid-section. The old man mask that Gabriel wore onstage only added to the track's madcap drama when Genesis played it live. **DW**

THE RETURN OF THE GIANT HOGWEED

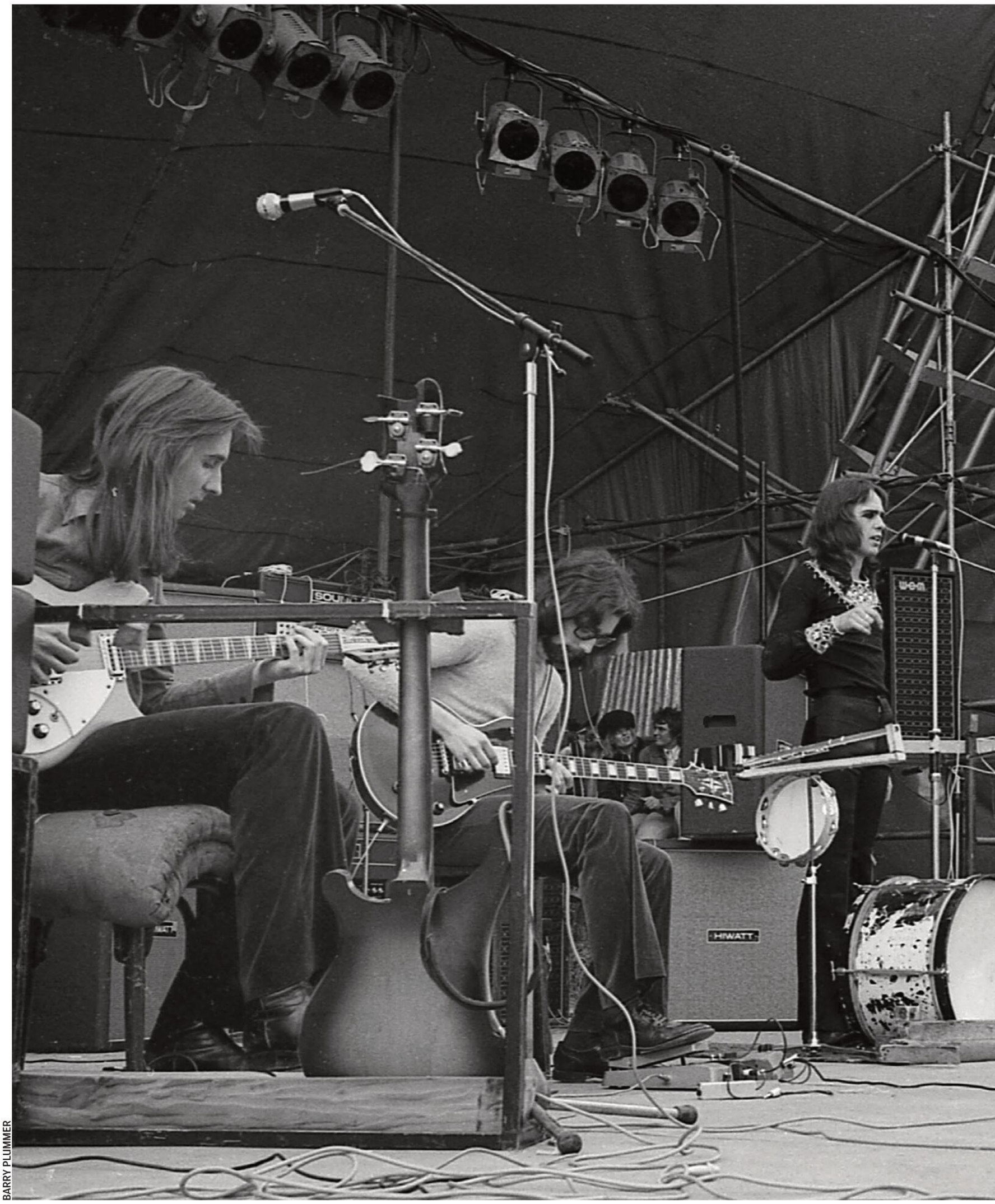
Nursery Cryme, 1971

The Return Of The Giant Hogweed is just another eight-minute song about heracleum mantegazzianum, the toxic plant brought to England from Russia by a Victorian explorer. So how does it manage to distinguish itself from all the other songs on this subject? Firstly, Peter Gabriel, with a relish for dark comedy, exaggerates its dangers out of all proportion, suggesting it might take over the Earth like something from *The Day Of The Triffids*. Musically, the track's noteworthy for then-new member Hackett's first foray (along with *The Musical Box*) into "tapping", the guitar technique deploying the plucking finger directly on the fretboard (and later appropriated by Eddie Van Halen). He and Banks play harmonised triplets – not something 1971 was hearing much of from Mungo Jerry. Both Hackett and Collins were bedding in well on this album, if tentatively compared to later works. Keith Emerson called it "incredible" in an interview with *Melody Maker*, and Geddy Lee cited it as one of his favourites as recently as 2012 in *The Quietus*. "Playful, compelling," he said. "I was totally entranced". **CR**

THE FOUNTAIN OF SALMACIS

Nursery Cryme, 1971

Here the band dug deep into Greek mythology to tell the tale of the nymph Salmacis and her attempted rape of Hermaphroditus, the son of Aphrodite and Hermes. When Salmacis called for her to be united forever with her love, a god answered her call by uniting the two forms as one androgynous being, giving rise to the name hermaphrodite. Often overlooked on an album that also features *The Musical Box* and *The Return Of The Giant Hogweed*, footage actually exists of the band performing this song on a 1972 Belgian TV show, while its inclusion on the extra live side of the UK version of *Three Sides Live* (a 1978 recording) helped bring further due acclaim. *The Fountain Of Salmacis* remains one of the finest of the band's early, story-led epics. **JE**



BARRY PLUMMER

Peter Gabriel leading his charges...

WATCHER OF THE SKIES

Foxtrot, 1972

In Chris Welch's book *Genesis: The Complete Guide To Their Music*, Tony Banks described *Foxtrot* as a "major leap forward. It was such a sweat to make this album." In August 1972, Genesis went into Island Studios, London, with producer Bob Potter, who was soon replaced by David Hitchcock. *Watcher Of The Skies* was already established as a live powerhouse, with Banks' swirling Mellotron providing the entrance music for Peter Gabriel, daubed in make-up with bat wings on his head to portray the Watcher, an alien visitor looking over planet Earth devoid of the extinct human race. Rutherford and Collins' syncopated, staccato rhythm section provides the punchiest counterpoint to Banks' Mellotron. **DW**

Foxtrot, 1972.

GET 'EM OUT BY FRIDAY

Foxtrot, 1972

This is an epic that uses both realism and science fiction to berate the greed of many landlords in the early 70s. The time span goes from the contemporary world through to 2012, and the story is related through three main characters: businessman and

landlord John Pebble, his henchman Mark Hall and Mrs Barrow, who is a tenant of Pebble's and falls prey to his machinations. Peter Gabriel voices all three, modifying his voice accordingly. The song concludes with an allusion to the connection between ruthless corporations and organised religion. *Get 'Em Out By Friday* was only ever performed live 28 times; the first was at the BBC Studios in September 25, 1972 and the final time being at The Winter Gardens in Bournemouth on October 12 the same year. Onstage, Gabriel would don elaborate costumes appropriate for each character. Interestingly, in 1976 French cartoonist Jean Solé wrote and drew a comic book adaptation of the song. This was published in *Fluide Glacial* number eight. **MD**

CAN-UTILITY AND THE COASTLINERS

Foxtrot, 1972

Steve Hackett's delicate 12-string forms the bedrock of the song that finishes off Side One of *Foxtrot*, with lyrics penned by the guitarist around the story of King Canute, whose tide-battling stunt was designed to show his followers their faith was misplaced. There's a liltingly seductive melody to it — one reason why it's a favourite of Genesis fans, including Steven Wilson. As another tragic hero *'forced a smile even though his hopes lay dashed'*, a vintage Banks keyboard flourish and some electric guitar hopscotch help the tale truly take flight. Longer early versions on live bootlegs are entitled *Bye Bye Johnny* and *Rock My Baby*, and are worth a listen despite the primitive sound quality. **JS**

SUPPER'S READY

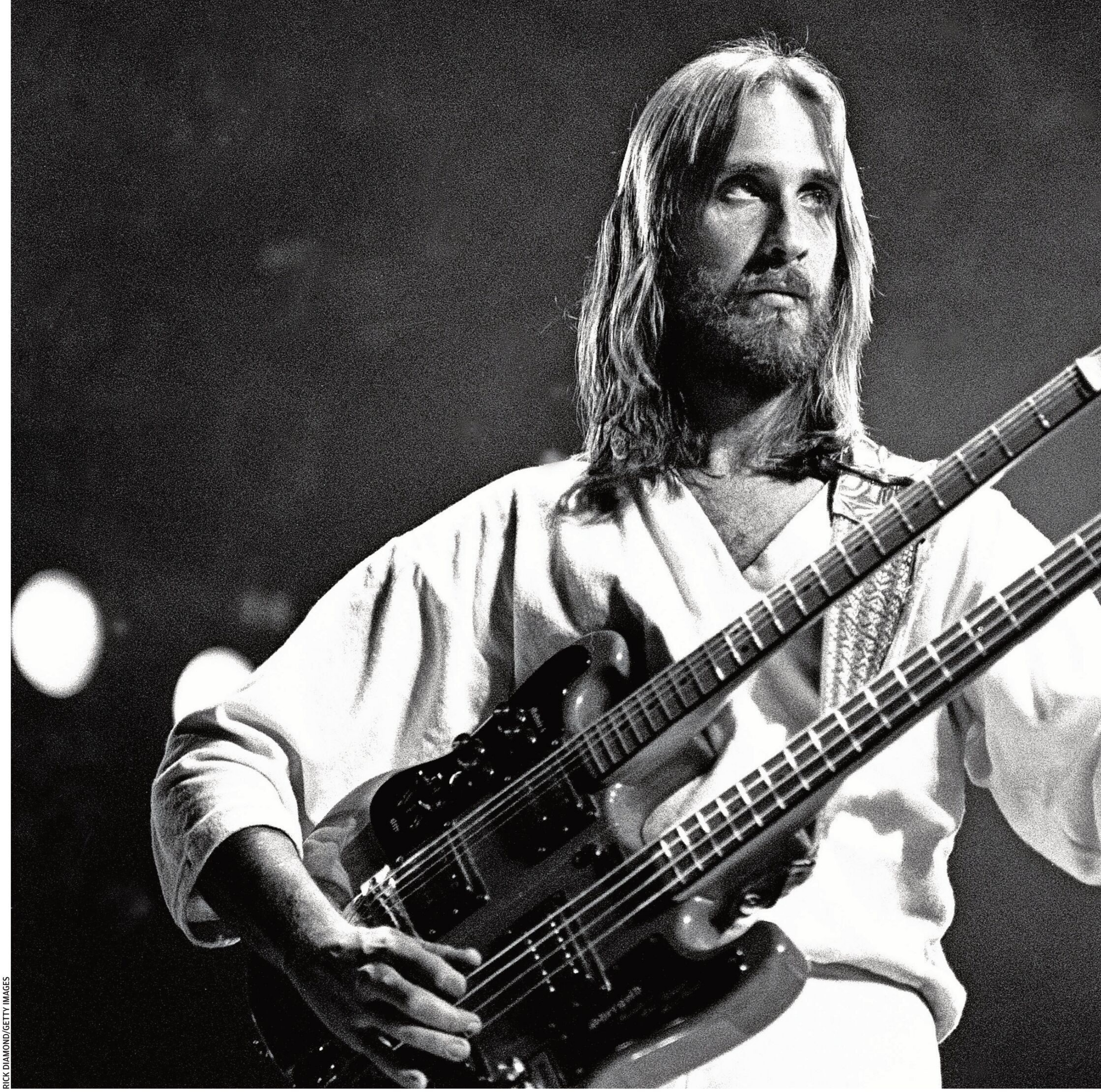
Foxtrot, 1972

Not just the big daddy of Gabriel-era Genesis epics but the peerless pinnacle of prog. Over 23 minutes, its seven sections wonderfully weave together echoing motifs, fusing elements of classical symphony and rock vigour with almost absurd ambition. Each new passage builds on its predecessors and, against all logic, it works, climbing to a peak of emotion and grandeur as it constructs "a new Jerusalem", no less. Ask Tony Banks why people rarely make music like this any more and he'll shrug, "Well… you're not allowed to. We wanted to go further, to push away from the regular structures." All change!

Peter Gabriel has hinted that the lyrics were prompted by nightmares his wife had and by the Bible's *Book Of Revelations*. There's also a liberal lashing of surrealism, which might have come out of a game of free association between Salvador Dalí and Sigmund Freud — *'the frog was a prince, the prince was a brick, the brick was an egg — and the egg was a bird. Hadn't you heard?'* We visit Willow Farm, Lover's Leap, and an apocalypse — in 9/8 time, naturally — for good measure. This is high drama.

It is therefore all the more amusing that the song was conceived and put together not atop a windswept mountain or in the Palace of Versailles, but during rehearsals in a refectory beneath the delightfully named Una Billings School Of Dance in London's Shepherd's Bush. As Steve Hackett has recalled, the sound of girls upstairs learning tap dancing would "clumpety clump" down through the ceiling. "It was all a bit strange, and the atmosphere influenced our subsequent efforts… you couldn't be too serious for long." Mike Rutherford has said luck played a role, because they weren't always sure what they were doing. "For my part," Gabriel told this writer, "it was influenced by John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as later was *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. We were consciously, then, trying to break out of tradition, tossing together different ideas and influences to see if there was a fresh way of putting them all together. I still enjoy it now."

And who doesn't enjoy a curious tale of good versus evil featuring Winston Churchill dressed in drag, the Antichrist and Narcissus turning into a flower? Perhaps the key moment, where everything lurches up a gear



RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES

Mike Rutherford sticks his neck(s) out.

and adds impact to all the music that's come before and is now to come, is the climactic '666' section. "That happened effortlessly, as good music often does," Rutherford's said. "When Pete put that '666' vocal over that passage, it felt a bit special. It wasn't how we'd imagined it. The game got raised." Banks was at first peeved that his school friend was trying vocals over where he'd planned keyboard solos, but conceded that "there's a lot of drama in the chords themselves, then what he did on top just took it to another level." In fact, he's added, "That half-minute or so is probably our peak." Most Genesis fans would agree that the whole 23 minutes or so are Genesis' dazzling zenith. Every time you hear it, it's "a brand new tune". **CR**

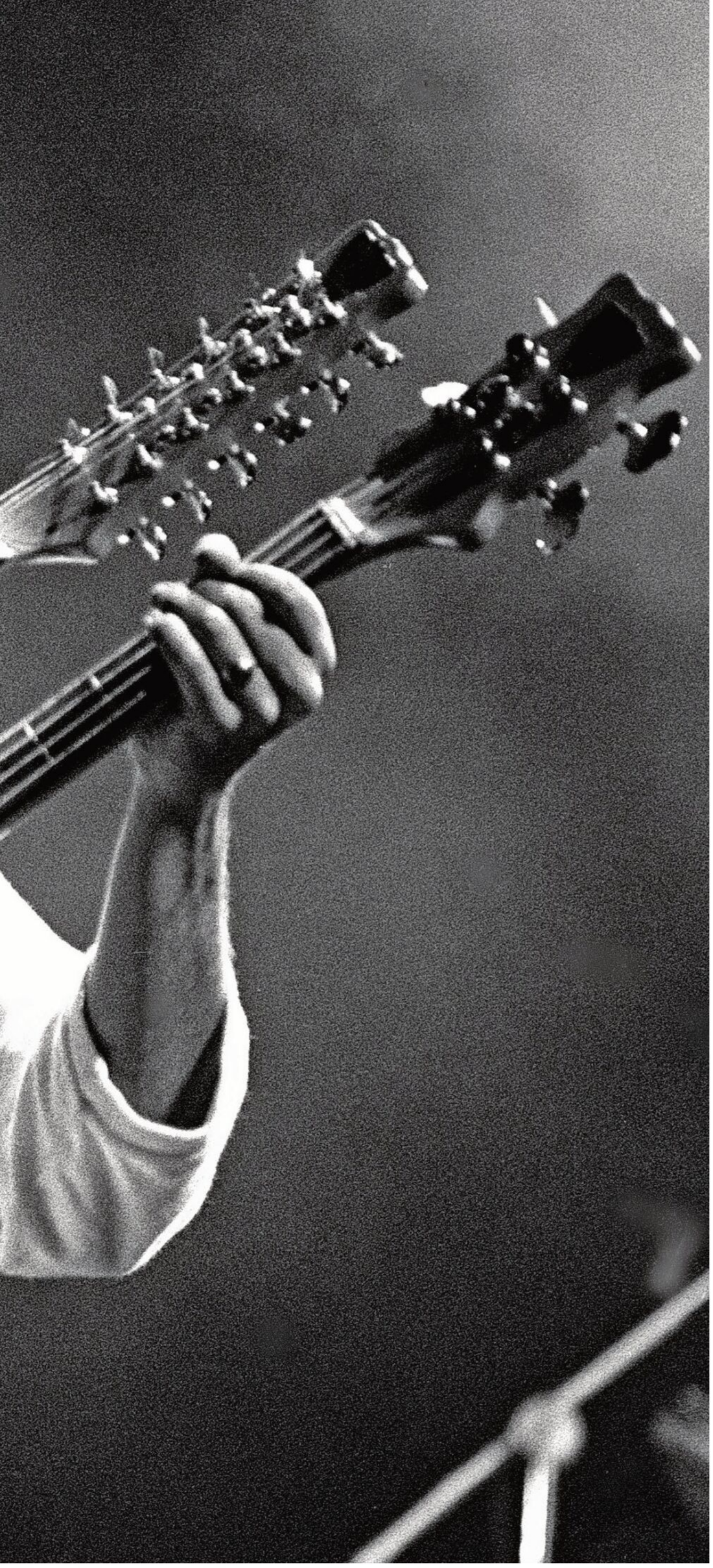
"Peter Gabriel is one of my favourite singers, but I never liked him in Genesis, and their best studio albums for me were always *Wind & Wuthering* and *A Trick Of The Tail*. Because of this, my best Genesis album is *Seconds Out* – it features some of the great songs of the first era but played/recorded better; in particular that live version of *Supper's Ready*. It's probably the only Genesis song I still listen to. The greatness of the songwriting really emerges in the feeling on the live version. There's something magic in it, and the way Phil delivers the epic finale is just incredible every single time!"

– GIANCARLO ERRA, NOSOUND

DANCING WITH THE MOONLIT KNIGHT

Selling England By The Pound, 1973

Selling England By The Pound was the first Genesis album produced by John Burns, a prog rock veteran who worked extensively with Jethro Tull, King Crimson and reggae stars Toots And The Maytals. The music was written over six weeks and recorded in three. "I was a very fast engineer, because I had to be. They didn't have any money, and they were about £100,000 in debt to Charisma Records," Burns would later recall to World Of Genesis in 2006. *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight* is a somewhat indecipherable



ode to a lost England but it's a fine showcase of where Genesis had come from while pointing to where they were heading. The beginning is positively pastoral, with Gabriel's plaintive voice over Banks' classical piano, before Rutherford's 12-string picks up the melody. Collins' drumming is nimble and propulsive, particularly in the expansive instrumental passages, where he sets a galloping pace, inspired by listening to Mahavishnu Orchestra. **DW**

"For me, it's *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight*. The opening lyric is wonderfully poignant and sets the song perfectly playing around articles of quintessentially English culture. Its metamorphosis is clever and witty and the dynamic build as the gears are engaged and the arrangement develops mark the song as one of the all-time progressive rock greats. It continues to elicit fond memories and I consider it a benchmark song from that particular incarnation of the band." – FISH

I KNOW WHAT I LIKE (IN YOUR WARDROBE)

Selling England By The Pound, 1973

"I love the album – it's completely bonkers from beginning to end," said Steve Hackett in the 2007 reissues interview for the Genesis 1970-1975 box set about *Selling England...*, which gave the band their first hit single with *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)*. The track reached No. 21 in the British charts and the group wouldn't trouble the Top 40 again until the *Spot The Pigeon* EP in 1977. Sandwiched between the portentous *Dancing With The Moonlit Knight* and the grandeur of *Firth Of Fifth*, *I Know What I Like...* reveals the more playful side of the band's music. The song was born out a guitar riff that Hackett and Collins liked to jam around, while the lyrics concern a character who's happy with his lot in life as a groundskeeper. Banks used a monophonic synthesiser for the first time on the album, adding new sounds to his arsenal alongside the trusted Mellotron and Hammond B3 Organ. "*I Know What I Like...* was in part an accident," says Gabriel in 2007. "Often when we tried to chase things, we failed miserably and I think we got to learn, really, that when we were ourselves and allowed things to happen we seemed to have more success and resonance with audiences." **DW**

FIRTH OF FIFTH

Selling England By The Pound, 1973

Tony Banks' finest hour? OK there's plenty of contenders for that honour, but the piano intro to the live favourite is so exquisite that you marvel at the fact that Genesis left it off the previous album. Writing-wise, it was primarily Banks' baby, though he collaborated with Rutherford on the lyrics, which the latter pooh-poohed as among the worst he'd ever been involved with. Well, a pun on Scotland's River Forth isn't everybody's idea of a relatable starting point. Yet when Banks' classically influenced tinkling begins, you're drawn in to the subsequent perversely complex time signatures, shifting tempos, and melancholy duelling between Gabriel's flute and Hackett's reiteration of the same on guitars, which sound more like violins. For him, too, this is a career high. It's usually one of the crowning glories of his live set to this day. In the context of the album, it lifts Side One into its next phase beautifully, responding to the relative levity of *I Know What I Like* with a reminder that nobody does elegant epics quite like this band: *The Cinema Show* serves a similar function at a kindred crossroads on Side Two. Even if Gabriel too was unimpressed with the lyrics – he wasn't the sole wordsmith at this point, and it hardly dovetailed with the prescient state-of-the-nation themes he was exploring – *Firth Of Fifth* just flows like, well, like a river. "I was just following the idea of a river and then I got a bit caught up in the cosmos and I don't quite know where I ended up, really," said Banks in *Songfacts*. "But it just about stands up, I think. For me musically it's got two or three very strong moments in it and fortunately they really carried us along. It's become one of the Genesis classics, and I'm very happy for that." **CR**

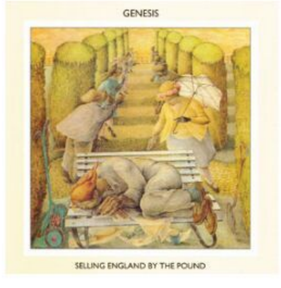
"If it is true, as it is true, that the two fundamental components of progressive rock are, in fact, rock and the classical musical heritage, I think that *Firth Of Fifth* can be considered one of the highest points of this musical world. The creative imagination of Genesis, as always, produces something magic, which, replayed today, perhaps, sounds even greater." – FABIO FRIZZI, COMPOSER

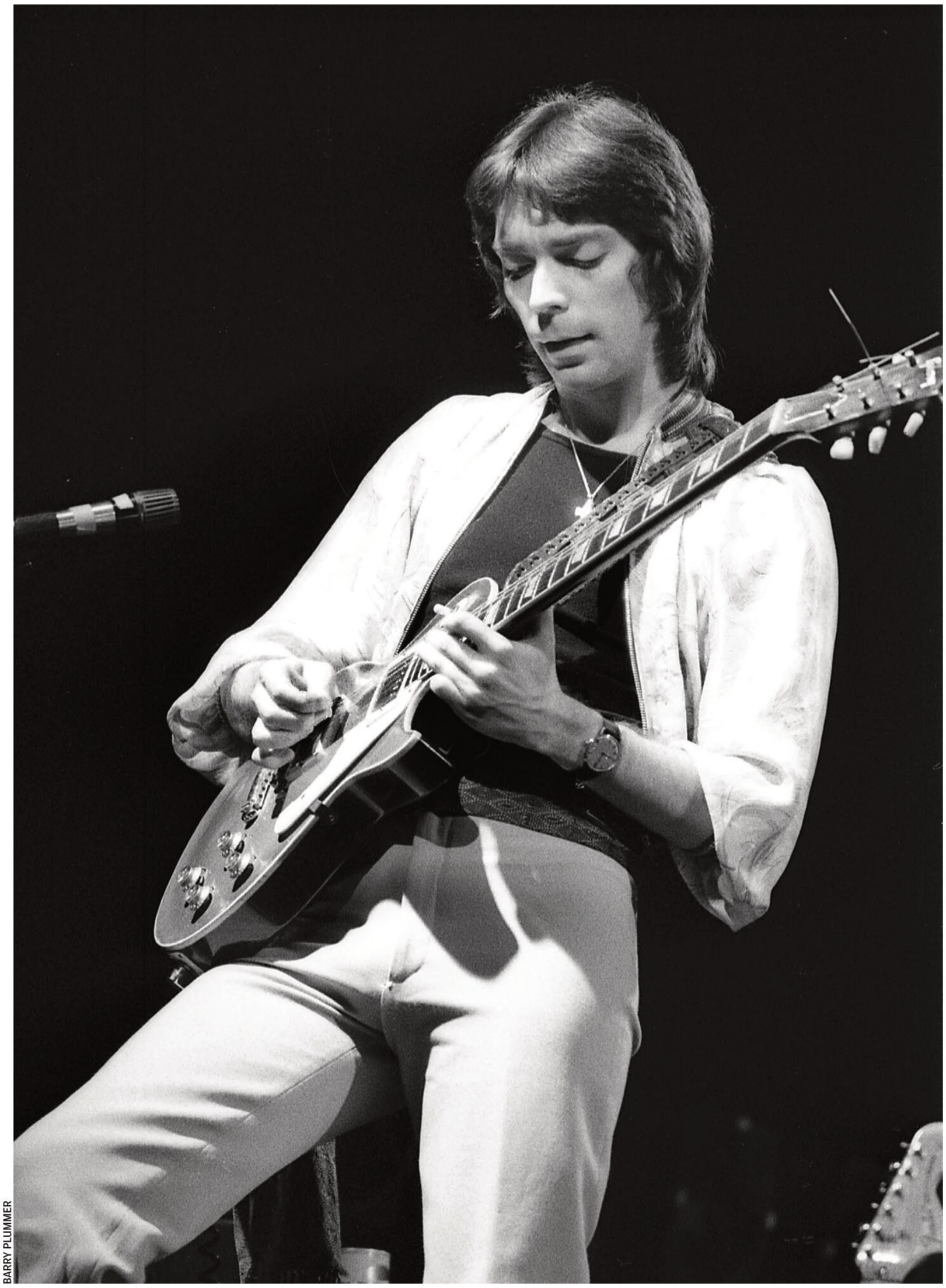
THE BATTLE OF EPPING FOREST

Selling England By The Pound, 1973

"We overworked it," Banks said in 2007. "There was like, 300 words a line... any air had been sucked out of it," Collins complained. But for all its lyrical density, what a breathtakingly tall tale assails us on this centrepiece of *Selling England By The Pound*. After a deceptively snoozy intro, one of the most antsy passages of any early Genesis track bursts in as if relaying urgent news. In a way, it was: Gabriel's lyrics were inspired by the true-crime tale of rival gangs battling for turf in the Essex badlands, and he even put ads in the paper to find out more info. His adoption of numerous different characters, from gangsters to vicars, is bizarrely brilliant, even if it makes for one of Genesis' real Marmite moments – for the band as well as fans. **JS**

***Selling England By The Pound*, 1973.**





BARRY PLUMMER

THE CINEMA SHOW

Selling England By The Pound, 1973

One of the rare upbeat songs from the Gabriel-era, eschewing their usual minor key melancholy for a cheerier vibe. *The Cinema Show* begins with Gabriel reaching up into his falsetto range to sing about Romeo and Juliet getting ready for their date at the movies. The highlight of the track is Banks' extended keyboard solo, which he plays with a notable fusion feel over a 7/8 riff written by Rutherford. "I think the instrumental at the end of this is probably the best of the ones we did at this stage in our careers anyhow," recalls Banks in the 2007 reissues interview to promote the *Genesis 1970-1975* box set. "It was an exciting thing to have created at the time, we were very pleased with it." Even after the band stopped playing the full song live, they continued to perform Banks' solo as part of a medley because it was, in Rutherford's words, "a huge crowd-pleaser, a great live song". **DW**

"*The Cinema Show* is what really drew me to Genesis. Tony Banks' synth soloing on this track is beautifully melodic, and at the same brilliantly inspiring with verve and technique. Surely his work on this song alone sets him high up on the pinnacle of rock keyboard players."

– GEOFF DOWNES, ASIA & YES

Steve Hackett would pass the Daz Doorstep Challenge.

THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway, 1974

Gabriel's art rock double-album swansong with the group is sometimes slagged off by silly people for being the kind of overblown folly that prompted punk. The fools. In reality, it merely pre-empts the new energy, with its short, twitchy, restless set changes and stylistic bravery. The album's opener, which introduces us to the loose concept of Rael's quest to find himself in New York City, reveals the singer's fascination with that metropolis. While the band were carving out the music, he had been busy conceiving the script in a separate room. "I loved New York," he told this writer. "It was very seductive. A magical place. And although punk hadn't been invented then, I thought we needed a hero from the streets, not from some English manor house." Banks' piano is as mellifluous as ever but Rutherford's fuzz bass is atypically punchy. Exiting on a quote from The Drifters' *On Broadway*, the track is an intriguing entry point into an underworld that's unique even for Genesis. **CR**

IN THE CAGE

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway, 1974

The troubled gestation of *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* – which, aside from creative tensions within the band, included the difficult birth of Peter Gabriel's first child and the end of Steve Hackett's first marriage – didn't prevent Genesis from creating their definitive prog rock masterpiece. *In The Cage* captures the mounting panic of the album's protagonist, Rael, who is trapped in a prison formed of stalactites and stalagmites. Underpinned by the heartbeat of Banks' pulsing keyboards, the musical intensity builds alongside Rael's growing claustrophobia. It's certainly tempting to read *In The Cage* as Gabriel longing for the creative freedom that he would embrace as a solo artist. **CR**

***The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, 1974.**

BACK IN N.Y.C.

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway, 1974

"I really wanted a tougher edge to [*The Lamb*]," Gabriel explained in 2007, and *Back In N.Y.C.* showcases the

BARRY PLUMMER

perennially shape-shifting prog icon's ability to summon up a truly punkish rage when the role requires it. In this case, he's playing Rael as the troubled youngster has a flashback to his gang-banging teens, running wild in the streets of Manhattan before his heart is removed and shaved with a razor. Obviously. An addictive Banks synth pattern frames the highly diverting tale and the band rock with a visceral relish, really cranking up the emotional intensity before a rare, if not unique example of Peter Gabriel swearing in song. Altogether now: *'Iiiiiii'm not full of shit!'* Contemporary live renditions, by all accounts, were even more exhilarating. **JS**

Phil Collins had his hands full... and then he took over lead vocals.

CARPET CRAWLERS

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway, 1974

On a frenetic album about consumerism and masturbation, you need your moments of contrast to really count. This is the band's most moving, emotive ballad, based on the lush atmospherics of Banks' rippling keyboards, yet sparing in its arrangement, allowing the song and its almost whispered chorus to shine. If pushed, Gabriel will say it's about "religion... supplication... probably some reference to Islamic prayer", but the mystery prevails. Amazingly, Banks reckons it was "the most spontaneous" track of all, with he and Rutherford composing the chords "and saying to Pete, 'Er, that's it.'" By pure alchemy, a sonic cathedral was built before anyone was even saying 'sonic cathedral'. **CR**

"Around 2002, I was asked to contribute a track to a Genesis tribute album, *The Fox Lies Down*. From their vast catalogue, it was difficult to choose one song. Finally, I decided on *Carpet Crawlers*, because I love the opening section, with an amazing chord structure that really sets up the whole song."

– JOHN FORD, STRAWBS

BARRY PLUMMER

THE LAMIA

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway, 1974

The Lamia originated in Greek myth as a child-eating monster, but evolved over time into a phantom who seduced men in order to devour them. Inspired by this mythical woman, *The Lamia* shows the different impulses at work within the band. On one hand, the classical mythology references are surely the product of the group's private school education, but the darkness of the lyrics shows Genesis — or perhaps more accurately Peter Gabriel — moving away from the romanticism of their previous records. It's sex as death, with the album's protagonist Rael turning the tables on the Lamia, consuming their bodies for sustenance after they've tasted his blood. Gabriel's solo releases would continue to mine this gloomy mood. **DW**

DANCE ON A VOLCANO

A Trick Of The Tail, 1976

Proving that the band could thrive without Gabriel, *Dance...* was born out a jam between Banks, Rutherford and Collins at the outset of the album's writing sessions, while Hackett was busy with his solo record, *Voyage Of The Acolyte*. Banks said in 2007, "It set us off in a good direction." Joined by producer and engineer David Hentschel, who worked on *Nursery Cryme*, the band sound stronger than ever, particularly Collins' drums, which were a little thin on *The Lamb....* True to their past, there are odd time signatures with sections in 7/8. Despite a series of auditions for a new vocalist, Collins proves more than able to fill Gabriel's shoes. It can only have helped ease the transition for fans that their voices are tonally very similar. **DW**

The band get a touch of scarlet fever.

A Trick Of The Tail, 1976.

"Choosing a favourite Genesis song is a tall order. The problem with Genesis is the shifting sands of their output – different eras throw up differing pleasures. So thank goodness that the first album of theirs I got was *Seconds Out*, which covers so many bases – and from that I choose *Dance On A Volcano*. Drama, power, mystery, 7/8, the band telling us and itself that, *'You better start doing it right,'* the perfect opener for their next adventure."

– AL MURRAY, COMEDIAN

ENTANGLED

A Trick Of The Tail, 1976

"*Entangled* is one of my favourite songs on the album," said Banks in 2007. The track came into being through an instance of true synchronicity. Steve Hackett had a guitar riff in 3/4 time but no chorus, while Banks had a chorus

idea — the *'If we can help you, we will,'* section — written on the piano in 3/4. Put together, the two made a perfect fit, while Collins' delicate vocal performance is amongst his finest. **DW**

SQUONK
A Trick Of The Tail, 1976

The first track that Collins recorded vocals for on *A Trick Of The Tail*, just to see how it sounded, confirmed that he was the right man to fill the vacant singer's role. For Collins, *Squonk* was the band's nod to Led Zeppelin, letting him channel some of John Bonham's heaviness — "A bit of *Kashmir*, a bit of *When The Levee Breaks*. When you listen to it, it doesn't sound like that, but that's what it was meant to be," said Collins in 2007. The track translated so powerfully live that the band used it as a show opener for years thereafter. **DW**

ROBBERY, ASSAULT & BATTERY
A Trick Of The Tail, 1976

A Trick Of The Tail proved this dog could wag without Gabriel, and Phil Collins elected to sing Side Two's opener in a voice he'd first used as a youth when playing the Artful Dodger in *Oliver!* Banks wrote the bulk of it, trying, with mixed results, to emulate Peter's lyrical mannerisms. Rhythmically inventive (Phil was growing in confidence regarding his status within the power structure), the song shuffles to its cathartic "done me wrong" pay-off. **CR**

RIPPLES...
A Trick Of The Tail, 1976

As Phil Collins steps up to the mic as lead singer for the first time, the music begins to evolve to suit the new four-piece format. "We thought songs like *Ripples* and *Mad Man Moon* would be great for his voice," Banks said in 2007, and the music also seemed to successfully straddle Genesis' past and future approaches to songwriting. It opens around Mike Rutherford's beautiful, alternately tuned 12-string, so we're instantly reminded of *The Cinema Show*. But once that irresistible, yearning beauty of a chorus comes in it has its cake and eats it: echoing an unmistakably Genesis sound while also embracing the broader, more emotive songwriting strokes the band were increasingly aspiring to. This love-lorn vignette also tells of Genesis starting to get in touch with their heart as well as their head, as the "blue girl" swims away, not just representing lost loves past, but a sense of age eroding beauty and innocence. **JS**

A TRICK OF THE TAIL
A Trick Of The Tail, 1976

The title track of the band's 1976 album. It was released as a single with *Ripples* on the B side. Not only was this the first Genesis single to feature Phil Collins on lead vocals, but they also shot their first promotional video for this song. The song itself was inspired by the 1955 William Goldman novel *The Inheritors*, in which the author used the device of a primitive tribe to comment on social morality. In the lyrics here, Tony Banks, who was the sole writer, talks of a beast who leaves his own kingdom to join human society, but he is captured and put on display as a freak. In the end, though, he comes out on top. The track was also partly influenced by *Getting Better* from The Beatles. And to some extent this is a partner to *Squonk* from the same album. Amazingly, Genesis have never played *A Trick Of The Tail* live! **MD**

Wind & Wuthering, 1976.

LOS ENDOS
A Trick Of The Tail, 1976

The closing instrumental from *A Trick Of The Tail* saw Collins bringing the jazz rock of his Brand X side project into Genesis, with a tip of the hat to Billy Cobham's *Spectrum*. "It was more my baby than anybody else's," said Collins in 2007, who came up with the melody that provides the platform for the band to bust some chops. It's a great showpiece for a drummer, who unleashes a series of blister-inducing runs around his sprawling kit. "It certainly turned into a great live piece, it was great fun to play and it really rounded off the album well," said Banks in 2007. **DW**

ELEVENTH EARL OF MAR
Wind & Wuthering, 1976

There's a thrillingly ebullient quality to *Wind & Wuthering*'s opener. Mike Rutherford's prowling, growling bass sets it off on the march, reflecting the unfolding lyric and his key role in its creation: "I had this idea after reading this history book about a failed Scottish rising," he told *NME*'s Steve Clarke soon afterwards. "I liked the idea of him — he was... a bit camp and a bit well-dressed." Meanwhile, the remnants of a Hackett ballad initially titled *The House Of The Four Winds* forms part of the middle section before the titular hero and his army stomp on towards London, which "will be their grave". **JS**

ONE FOR THE VINE
Wind & Wuthering, 1976

This Tony Banks masterpiece was almost ready for *A Trick Of The Tail*, but Banks says he spent a year on it "to get it right". Partly inspired by Michael Moorcock's sci-fi novel *Phoenix In Obsidian*, the narrative follows a reluctant prophet-like 'chosen one', forced to lead others into battle then electing to disappear. Or does he? A live perennial, from an album about which most of the band seem weirdly sniffy, its interplay between Banks and the departing Hackett is as gorgeous as the debate among fans about "what it means" is endless. Back in '76, *Sounds* magazine called it "Genesis' finest moment". **CR**

BLOOD ON THE ROOFTOPS

Wind & Wuthering, 1976

One oft-remarked-upon aspect of Genesis' sound is their 'English melancholy', and this may be the finest example. Collins and Hackett teamed up to write a bittersweet "dark and grey" elegy, railing (ever so politely, gently and English-ly) at the tedium of the TV news. Of course there's tea involved, as a remedy. The other members have cited this as perhaps Hackett's greatest contribution to the band, and, to this day, when he plays it live it's spellbinding. **CR**

"While *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* has remained my favourite Genesis album over the years, there are at least a dozen pieces – from 1970 to 1991 – that could be contenders for my favourite song by the band. I'm going to go with *Blood On The Rooftops*. It's a mesmerising fusion of the poetic and the mundane, with fragile yet majestic music accompanying a beautifully observed and surprisingly gritty lyric."
– TIM BOWNESS, NO-MAN

AFTERGLOW

Wind & Wuthering, 1976

From the 1976 album *Wind & Wuthering* and written by Banks, the storyline is about being the last person left alive after a nuclear holocaust. But in a wider context it can be seen about coming to terms with loneliness. Oddly, Banks once commented that a few days after writing this, he noticed the resemblance it seemed to have to *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas*. He also says it was written very quickly. And Collins used massed sampled vocals at the climax, mimicking 10cc's *I'm Not In Love*. The band played *Afterglow* live no fewer than 560 times, making it their fifth most-performed song onstage. **MD**

DEEP IN THE MOTHERLODE

...And Then There Were Three..., 1977

If the trio struggled to find a coherent overall feel or consistent temperature on this album, there were still stirring individual tracks. This Rutherford composition, bringing Side Two in on a thunderous high, got past its working title of 'Heavy' and features him playing bottleneck slide guitar

The only thing about them is the way they walk... Rutherford, Banks and Collins in 1992.

PAUL HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES

after next-to-no practice. Set during the Nevada gold rush (the hook *'go west young man'* became its title as a single in America and Japan), it glistens. **CR**

FOLLOW YOU, FOLLOW ME

...And Then There Were Three..., 1977

"This can't be any good," Mike Rutherford said to *Classic Rock* in 2017, thinking of Genesis' first hit single as a trio in 1978, because it came together so quickly. His introductory guitar riff, performed with an MXR flanger, was built upon by Banks' melody line and filled-out chords, before Collins' vocal melody was firmed up. "It worked so well as a very simple thing," said Banks in 1982 to *Trouser Press*. Rutherford added lyrics in minutes, its romantic sentiments inspired by his wife, Angie. "Normally lyrics take agonising over and developing. But... you realise that's the charm." Indeed it is — and as well as a radio-friendly earworm, it added an anthemic final flourish to *...And Then There Were Three...*. **JS**

DUCHESS

Duke, 1980

After the opening crash of *Behind The Lines* on 1980's *Duke*, things get decidedly more atmospheric as the band relay the tale of a rock star diva, charting her rise to superstardom and subsequent fall. It was the first ever Genesis song to use a drum machine and was even released as a single, reaching No. 46 in the UK chart. The subsequent video, shot at Liverpool's Empire Theatre, showed Banks, Collins and Rutherford watching the titular Duchess in full flow. **JE**

DUKE'S TRAVELS/ DUKE'S END

Duke, 1980

The *Duke* album was originally conceived around a 30-minute suite of music that comprised *Behind The Lines, Duchess, Guide Vocal, Duke's Travels* and *Duke's End*. Fearing comparisons with *Supper's Ready*, the band decided against sequencing the songs in that way. They still performed the suite live, however, with Collins introducing it as "The story of Albert", the character from the album cover. These two songs, making up the closing 10 minutes of the album, make for a full-on prog rock work-out, reprising themes from *Behind The Lines* and reminding those who were aghast at the singles success Genesis were achieving that they could still indulge when the mood took them. **JE**

***...And Then There Were Three...*, 1977.**

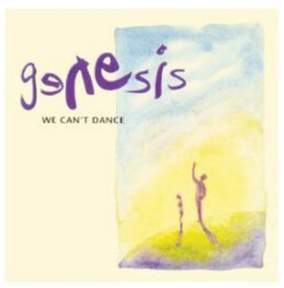
***Duke*, 1980.**

***Abacab*, 1981.**

***Genesis*, 1983.**

***Invisible Touch*, 1986.**

***We Can't Dance*, 1991.**



ABACAB

Abacab, 1981

This title was not, as some believe, the chord sequence of the opening song of the album of the same name, but rather how sections of an early version of the song were labelled using letters of the alphabet. Some Genesis fans recoil from *Abacab* because of the production sound, others because of the use of the Earth, Wind & Fire horns. But it had some fine moments, especially the title track. The live version from *Three Sides Live* really has an impact. **JE**

DODO/LURKER

Abacab, 1981

The longest track from *Abacab* is another track that benefits from its live retelling on *Three Sides Live*, on which the band's storytelling format and musicality come back to the fore. The lyrics to the *Lurker* section, which were written by Tony Banks, include a convoluted riddle that continues to puzzle the band's fans. "There is no real solution," Banks told *Record Collector* in 1997. "It was a bit of a joke. I didn't have anything specific in mind." **JE**

MAMA

Genesis, 1983

Influenced by John Lennon, Grandmaster Flash and David Niven's *The Moon's A Balloon*, the opening track from 1983's *Genesis* album came to life with Rutherford playing around with a drum machine in the studio. The song itself is one of the darkest and moodiest of the entire Collins era, described by Steve Hackett as "hauntingly beautiful". Despite telling the story of a young man yearning for a prostitute, *Mama* was also a massive success as a single, reaching No. 4 in the UK charts, yet remains one of the most experimental-sounding songs of latter-era Genesis, and a massive live favourite as well. **JE**

"For me, it's *Mama*. Isolation. Disconnection. Searching. Reaching out... *'It is getting so hard'*. What this song means to me, what it does to me, is to put me in a place of nostalgia, confusion, clarity, a sense of loss, a sense of *being lost* – and found – all at once. A great melody. A great vocal. A great song. Brilliant."
– DANIEL CAVANAGH, ANATHEMA

HOME BY THE SEA/ SECOND HOME BY THE SEA

Genesis, 1983

For many, or at least those who don't wave the "Post Gabriel/Hackett the band were rubbish" card, this song was the last real prog throw of the dice (not true, of course). Telling the story of a man who burgles a haunted house, only to end up the prisoner of its ghosts, who relay their stories to him for the rest of his life, the two connected pieces form an 11-minute suite that closes Side One of *Genesis*. By far and away the highlight of the album and a belter when played live, it was even released as a single in some countries (not the UK, obviously). The video was shot at Dallas' Reunion Arena in 1984. **JE**

DOMINO

Invisible Touch, 1986

1986's incredibly successful *Invisible Touch* featured no fewer than four hit singles, fuelling detractors' claims the band had abandoned their roots. *Domino* suggests they hadn't entirely. A 10-minute-plus suite of two songs, *In The Glow Of The Night* and *The Last Domino*, the lyrics, penned by Banks, were inspired by the Lebanon war of 1982. It showed Genesis could still prog out, even if they were concurrently *Spitting Image* puppets on *Top of The Pops*. **JE**

"Synth- and FX-driven 80s Genesis is a sound that for me very much defines that era of music. *Domino* is a stunning example of that sound but also the band's ability to compose highly intelligent arrangements that are packed with so many hooks that even the pop world can't resist."
– JAMES MONTEITH, TESSERACT

FADING LIGHTS

We Can't Dance, 1991

Ripples never come back, but there's a hint of the *A Trick Of The Tail* ballad, at least in its mood, in this finale to 1991's multi-million seller, Collins' last studio recording with the band. A misty-eyed mope about memory and the passing of time, it comes in with Phil singing over a drum machine and synth beds before Banks and Rutherford crash in alongside big 'proper' drums. A long instrumental flurry, the net result of much previous improvisation, lifts us into elevated epic territory. It feels like Phil's farewell, even if that wasn't known at the time. **CR**

Heavy Load

Heavy questions for heavy rockers

Steve Hackett on healing, expensive lasers and cups of tea.

Interview: **Paul Elliott**

Steve Hackett has crammed a lot into his 64 years. He is now on his third marriage and, with a career that begun in the late 60s, he's been one of the most influential figures in progressive rock. As the guitarist in Genesis between 1970 and 1977, London-born Hackett featured on landmark albums such as *Foxtrot* and *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*. As a solo artist he has recorded 27 albums of experimental music – and describes his latest, *Wolflight*, as "a journey of surprise and ambush". The quintessential English gentleman rock star, Hackett sips tea – white, one sugar – as he discusses his work, his life and the meaning of it all…

What's surprising about your new album?
The sheer audacity of it. It runs the gamut from folk to classic to pop, rock... Combining many styles has always been my calling card.

***Wolflight* – what exactly does that mean?**
It's the hour before the dawn, when wolves hunt. It's spookier than twilight. I'd be up at five in the morning, working on my music.

Getting up so early, did your missus give you a bollocking if you woke her?
No, she's very understanding. I'd stagger out of bed and into the next dream. Logic hasn't arrived at that point. It's a magical time. People of a psychic persuasion would say that you're channelling then, and it does seem as if all sorts of unlikely things kick in when I'm open.

Are you of a psychic persuasion?
I did pursue that stuff at one point, but I got wary of having any form of guru. Am I a believer? Do I believe in other realms? Am I still a hippie in that way? Absolutely, yes. But I don't belong to any tribe. I'm a tribe of one.

Do you believe in God?
I thought that Lennon said it best: "If there is such a thing as God, we're all part of it."

If not a musician, what would you be?
A failed rent boy.

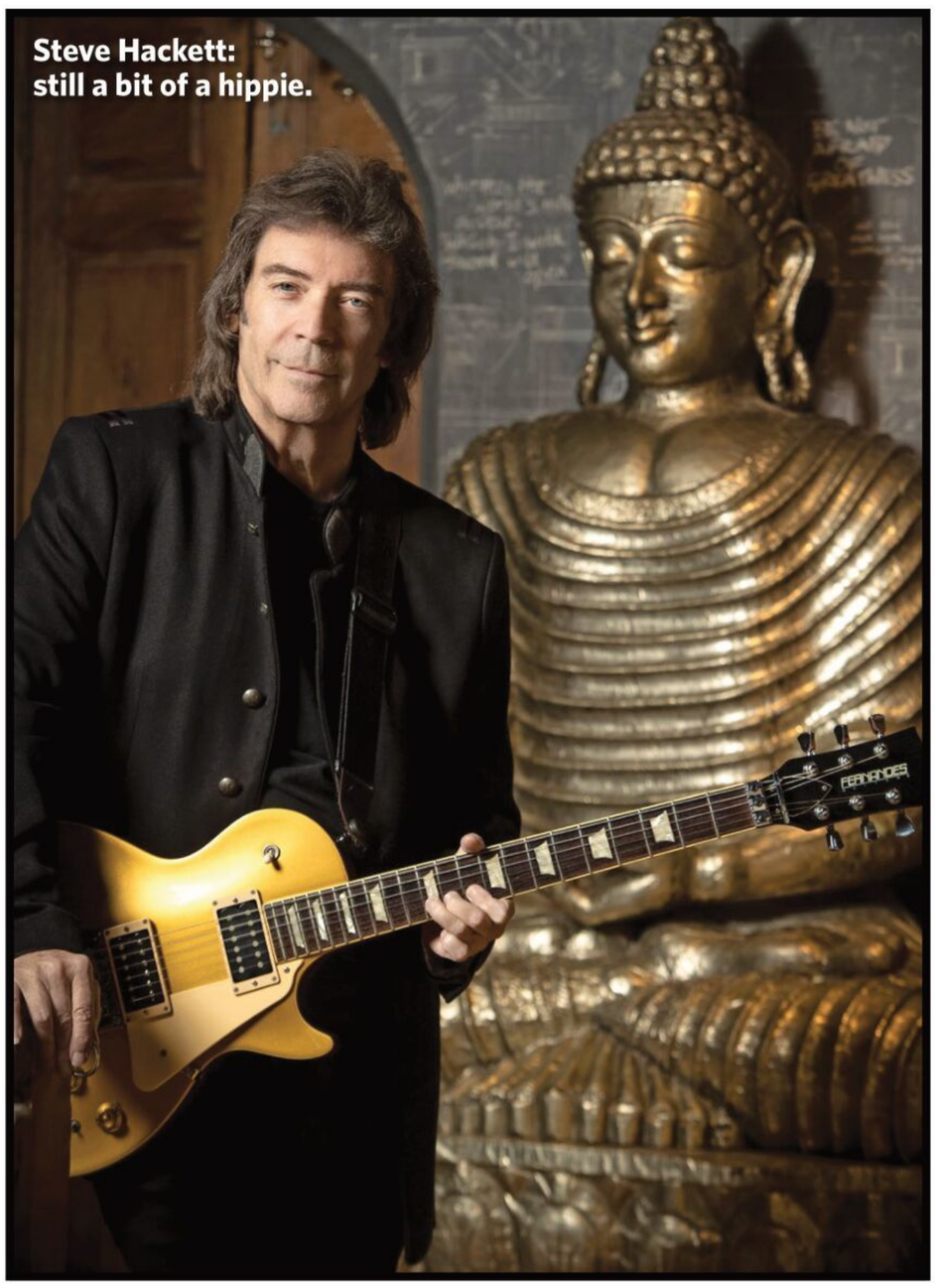
I certainly wasn't expecting that answer.
No, I thought I'd throw that in for a laugh. I failed at many things. After school I was sacked from a few jobs – working for a solicitor, a surveyor, in a factory…

What can Steve Hackett do that nobody else can?
I'm not very practical. I couldn't build you a shed that would stand up. But I can laugh at myself every day. It's the healthiest thing you can do – laugh every day.

You can play guitar. What makes a good player?
You've got to love it. There are times when you'll be disappointed, moments of crisis in your own playing, when you feel you can't move forward. We all suffer from these limitations. But the love of it need never go away.

Have you done a lot of drugs?
I did my share. But I had friends who fell prey to drugs. It was a salutary lesson, watching people become schizophrenic and fall apart.

Was there one bad experience that turned you off drugs?
I took some cocaine at a party and I don't know if it was cut with heroin but I could tell that I was nearly having a heart attack. I made a decision: that I was never going to put anything up my nose that was stronger than nose drops for a cold. I've never had any form of addiction, other than tea. The Nazis could have tortured me just by taking away my tea.



Steve Hackett: still a bit of a hippie.

"The Nazis could have tortured me just by taking away my tea."

Where do you stand politically?
I've voted for all three major parties, but these days I'm voting for the left, because there are too many people hurting in this country.

What was your biggest waste of money?
There was a laser that Genesis invested in. It cost a hundred and twenty thousand pounds and then didn't work.

What's the lowest point of your career?
When I left Genesis, I had the occasional hit single, but they were taking over the world, and I couldn't possibly compete. But I realised there was a reason for walking out on a successful band. It meant that I owed my allegiance to no one – just to the music.

What's the worst review you've had?
I've had great reviews, but the one you always remember is the bad one. It was for [1979 solo album] *Spectral Mornings*. It said: "Nobody listens to this kind of rubbish any more."

What is your greatest regret?
I do healing, and I wish I were better at it.

What kind of healing is that?
It's what goes on in the world of the invisible. There's so much out there we don't know about. Some people have the power to heal. Most of the time people are quite suspicious of it, so I don't push it. If anyone wants me to help, I will. I've had healing done on me. The older you get, you start to lose more friends, and people who are terminally ill have refused any help I might give them – as it's not something that's from their doctor. But if I were them, I would try anything.

What is the meaning of life?
To have a great time and to make sure others have a great time too. And to drink as many cups of tea as you possibly can, without your bladder bursting.

And what will be written on your tombstone?
See you on the other side.

TINA KORHONEN/PRESS

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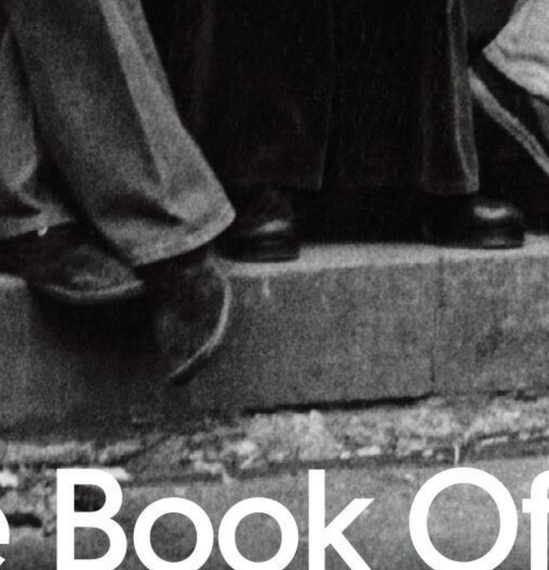
The Book Of Genesis...

The epic saga of the band that changed prog, including interviews with Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins, Steve Hackett, Tony Banks, Mike Rutherford and more



"*FOXTROT* IS WHERE WE BECAME SIGNIFICANT"

The full story – as told by the people who were there

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